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# Prabuddha Bharata

OR

## Awakened India



प्रबुद्ध भारत प्राचीन वर्तमान |



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प्रबुद्ध भारत प्राप्य वराजिष्ठोभवत् ।

Editor, Upas. L.



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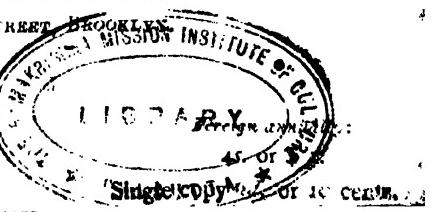
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# Grabut e x Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत आपत



ग्राम्य ब्रह्माण्डोपर्यन् ।

Satya Upanishad

13.7.78

Ch

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

VOL. XXIII ]

FEBRUARY 1918

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## CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA,

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

[Translated from Bengali.]

### XIII.

[Place.—Belur, the rented Math premises.

Year: 1898.

Subjects:—The birthday anniversary at the Math of Sri Ramakrishna-deva.—Investiture by Swamiji of some non-Brahmin followers with the holy thread.—The loving cordiality with which Srijut Girish Chandra Ghosh used to be received at the Math.]

In the year of Swamiji's return from the West, the birthday festivities of Sri Ramakrishna-deva were celebrated in the temple-garden of Rani Rashmani. But for various reasons, the celebration ceased to take place at the temple-garden next year. The Math had been removed during the year from Alambazar to a rented garden-house on the Sanges at Belur, belonging to Babu Nilambar Mukherji, and shortly after, the site of the present Math had been purchased. But still the anniversary celebration this year could not be held on this site, as it was then full of jungles and at places quite uneven. So the public celebration was held this time at the well-known temple buildings of the Daws.

Previous to this celebration, on the second day after the new moon of the month of Phalgun, the ceremony of Sri Ramakrishna's nativity was observed at Nilambar Babu's garden-house, and a day or two after that Sri Ramakrishna's portrait and other holy adjuncts were taken over to the newly purchased site for the present Math and were installed there with due solemnities and sacraments. Swamiji was staying at the time at the garden-house of Nilambar Babu, and arrangements had been made for the Tithipuja (Nativity) on a grand scale. The chapel was filled with the freshest and nicest offerings and adjuncts of worship according to Swamiji's directions, and he was moving

about that day, himself taking account of everything necessary for the great ceremony.

On the auspicious morning of the great day, everybody was joyful, and nothing passed among the *bhaktas* (followers) there but topics touching the Master. Swamiji was now standing before the chapel busy inspecting the preliminaries of the worship.

This inspection over, Swamiji asked the disciple, "Well, you have brought the holy threads, I hope?"

Disciple.— Yes, Sir, I have. Everything is ready as you desired. But, Sir, I am at a loss to make out why so many holy threads are in requisition.

Swamiji.— Every *dvijati*\* (twice-born) has a right to investiture with the holy thread. The Veda itself is the authority in this matter. Whoever will come to this sacred birthday of our Thakur, I shall invest him with the holy thread. These people have fallen from their true status, and the scriptures say that after true purification those fallen in the way earn the right to investiture with the holy thread. This is the great day of Thakur's nativity, and men will be purified by taking his name. So the assembled *bhaktas* are to be invested with the holy thread to-day; do you now understand?

Disciple.— I have collected, Sir, quite a good number of holy threads according to your instructions, and after the worship I shall with your permission invest the *bhaktas* with them.

Swamiji.— To *bhaktas* besides the Brahmins give this *mantra* of Gāyatri (here Swamiji recites to the disciple the special Gāyatris of the twice-born who are non-Brahmins). By degrees all the people of the land have to be lifted to the position of Brahmins, not to speak of the *bhaktas* of our

Thakur. Each Hindu, I say, is a brother to every other, and it is we who have degraded them by our outcry, "Don't touch," "don't touch!" And so the whole country has been plunged to the utmost depths of meanness, cowardice and ignorance. These men have to be uplifted; words of hope and faith have to be proclaimed to them. They have to be assured, "You are also men like us and you have all the rights that we have."

Disciple.— Yes, Sir, it should be so.

Swamiji.— Now, please ask those who will take the holy thread to finish their bath in the Ganges. Then after prostrations before Thakur, they will have their investiture.

According to these directions, about 40 to 50 *bhaktas* after ablutions in the Gang received the Gāyatri from the disciple and were invested with the holy thread. The Math was in a commotion. Those who went through the ceremony bowed again before Thakur and made their obeisance also to Swamiji. When receiving them Swamiji's face beamed with profound delight. A little after this, Srijut Girish Chandra Ghose arrived at the Math from Calcutta.

Now arrangements for music were made ready at the desire of Swamiji, and Sannyasins of the Math now commenced decorating Swamiji's person to the top of their bent—with ear-rings of shell, with camphor-white ashes besmeared all over the body, with the Yogi's plaited locks flowing down to the feet, with the trident placed in the left hand, with bracelets of *rudraksha* beads on both arms, and three-filleted garlands of the same beads hanging down to the knees! It is impossible to describe the sublime expression which shone forth from Swamiji's form after these embellishments. Whoever saw it that day declared with unanimity that *Bāla-bhairava* (Shiva's transfiguration as a youthful *Bhairava*) was manifesting Himself in Swamiji's person on the occasion! Swamiji also anoint-

\* The Brahmins, Kshatriya, and the Vaishyas are all *dvijatis*.

the persons of the other monks with the sacred ashes and they appeared like so many embodied *Bhairavas*\* around Swamiji so that the Math seemed that day to emulate the glories of the Kailasa mount! One's mind is filled with joy even at the remembrance of that spectacle.

Seated in the "lotus-seat" posture facing the West, with his hands free to hold the *Tánpura*, Swamiji chanted now with the sweetest intonation and voice the Sanskrit hymn beginning with कृजनं रामरामिति ('repeating in a low tone the name of Rama' etc.), and when the chanting came to a close, he went on repeating the holy words, "Rám, Rám, Sri Rám, Rám." Heavenly nectar seemed to be dripping from the sound of every letter as was being uttered! His eyes were half-closed and the *Tánpurā* was giving out its harmony at the touch of his fingers. For some time nothing could be heard in the whole of the Math excepting the sound of Rám, Rám, Sri Ram, Ram. Half an hour passed by, and nothing else came out from the lips of all who were present. To-day they were all inebriated with the nectared name of Rama coming out in Swamiji's voice. And at the moment, it occurred to the disciple, was not Swamiji singing the name of Rama to-day actually merging into oneness with the Shiva ideal? † The natural sublimity of Swamiji's countenance seemed to-day to have deepened hundredfold; from the corner of the half-closed eye the splendour of the dawning sun seemed on the point of bursting forth, and it looked as if his whole large frame was about to reel with the intensity of an ineffable intoxication! But ah, the beauty of it all is beyond description, beyond all explanation, and is only an object of realisation within

\* Bhairavas are the divine companions of Shiva as well as protagonists of the Shiva cult.

† Sri Rama's name is said to constitute such a 'ul-absorbing *mantra* for Shiva that it intoxicates 'm into the highest Samadhi.

one's soul. Those who saw it then remained —विचारितारम्भ इवापत्तये—“as if on a painted canvas with their painted attitudes.”

After the chanting of Sri Rama's name, Swamiji continued to sing a song of Tulsidas on Sri Ramachandra in the same intoxicated strain of mind. But as there was no good hand at playing on the *Pakholij*, Swamiji's mental absorption into harmony was evidently being disturbed. So he now asked Swami Saradananda to do the singing and himself took up the *Pakholij*. The first song the Swami sang was of Swamiji's own composition describing the rise of the creation in Absolute Consciousness. It seemed the stream of the Ganges was rising in a joyous swell at the sublime, voluminous roll of the Mridanga and the whole room was tense at the same time with the sweet, pervasive voice of Swami Saradananda. After this song, others which Sri Ramakrishna-deva used to sing himself, were rendered one by one.

After this, Swamiji suddenly took to putting off all the decorations he had on his person and began to dress Girish Babu with them. With his own hands, he applied the sacred ashes and placed the ear-rings, the *rudraksha* bracelets and garlands, and the plaited locks on Girish Babu's body. And Girish Babu by this change of guise was revealed as a new personality, a joyous surprise to all the *bhaktas* present. Then declared Swamiji, “Paramahamsa-deva used to say, our brother is the incarnation of Bhairava. There's no distinction between him and us.” Girish Babu sat speechless all the time and seemed perfectly resigned to all the manipulations of his monastic brothers engaged in dressing him. A piece of *gerua* was at last brought and he was draped in it and uttered no word of remonstrance. For he had merged his self fully to-day into the wishes of his brothers in discipleship. Swamiji now said: “Well, G. C., you are to speak to us to-day about Thakur. And all of you (turning all

around himself) sit quiet and attentive." Even then, Girish Babu sat motionless, voiceless like marble, absolutely lost in joy at the sight of the wonderful workings of the spirit of Him and the abundant joy of the disciples of Him at whose birthday ceremony all were assembled to-day. And when at last he opened his lips, he did so to say, "Ah, what can this humble self speak of our Lord

of unbounded mercy! Verily in this alone realise that mercy that to me, this low creature, He has extended the privilege of sitting and mixing on the same footing with you Sannyasins, pure from your childhood who have renounced all lust and lucre. While speaking thus, the words choked his throat and he could not speak anything more that day. (To be continued.)

### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

**M**EN in all parts of the inhabited globe are keenly looking to-day for some great change for the better in the life of all the peoples brought into contact or deeper intercourse by European civilisation. The air is full of coming changes, and reconstruction has become the watchword of human efforts all over the world. The world-convulsing war, it is believed, is bound to work out a great change in the life of all mankind, and it is already doing so. Witness the salutary change in the attitude of the Imperialist, the earthly Providence of millions of human beings, for is it not wonderful that he of all men to-day would declare with the tremendous weight and authority of the spokesman of a nation in war to all belligerents that a great principle for which the nations on his side would fight on even unto death is the principle of political self-determination among all conquered races all over the world?

And besides this evil of political domination of one people by another, there are other evils of human life which the changes, fondly expected to be soon coming over the life of nations, are going to remedy. For instance, democratisation of all governments is believed to be an inevitable change that the war is working out, and thousands are dying on battle-fields in the faith, shared by many more thousands who may not so die, that the

present war is the supreme factor to minimise war on the globe for all time to come. Men are thus looking forward to the imminent cure of some of the biggest evils of human life. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and men have all the more reason to hope for some great good, when the whole world is in travail. But just as when the night is passed in tribulations and people hourly hope for the breaking of the day, their expectant gaze is turned towards the East, so is there no exact direction in which the gaze of a whole expectant world has to be directed in watching the advent of those changes all over the world which will cure the many tormenting evils of life? Does this direction from which the ringing changes will burst forth lie across the sphere of our changing political circumstances, or does it lie across those of social or industrial developments? Where, oh where, shall we direct our watchful attention to catch the very first glimpses of the dawning hope?

The answer to this question comes from the following utterance of Swami Vivekananda. Speaking in 1897 at Kumbhakonam, Madras of Europe and latest developments in thought there, Swamiji says, "There, too, they have their thinkers, great men; and they are already finding out that this race after gold and power is all vanity of vanities; many, nay,

most of the cultured men and women there are already weary of this competition, this struggle, this brutality of their commercial civilisation, and they are looking forward to something better. There is a class which till clings on to political and social changes as the only panacea for the evils in Europe, but among the great thinkers there, other ideals are growing. They have found out that no amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. It is a change of the soul itself for the better that alone will cure the evils of life." Whether this true principle for the real betterment of human life on earth has or has not been hopelessly obscured by the dominating issues of the political struggles now raging most furiously all over Europe is a matter for further observation and study. So far as indications go at present, it seems clear that the nations at war, at least, are bent on staking everything on such issues of the war as they firmly believe to be productive of remedial changes sure to bring about the betterment of life on earth. This fervent belief, so fervently expressed every now and then, proves that for curing many existing evils of life, the belligerent peoples at least rely absolutely on the "political manipulation of human conditions," and this belief has now evidently made itself contagious all the world over. Are not most of us, in India even, beginning to build our hopes for our country and its regeneration on the political changes which we expect the keen exigencies of war problems to impose on the present system of government in India?

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Evidently therefore, men are to-day looking forward to politics more than to anything else for the cure of the many evils which are preying upon modern life both in India and abroad. In India, for instance, it is earnestly believed that the political upliftment of the people will surely remove the crushing misery and distress which threaten to annihilate

them, and political upliftment can only be brought about by bold changes in the political government of the country, that is, by a proper manipulation of the political conditions under which the people live. This is all very plain on the surface. But a very important premise is unwittingly suppressed in the argument, for no good changes imposed on *outward* conditions can be of any avail unless men are *inwardly* strong to rise equal to those changed conditions of life. And the strength of a whole people can never be judged by the isolated strength of an insignificant minority. The political problem, therefore, really rests on the inward strength which our people can exert for the purpose of political self-possession and political self-government. Even if this strength of self-possession is once acquired by the people, it is bound automatically to work itself out in necessary changes in the political conditions of life. This self-expression from within of the people in India forms not only the real achievement which alone is to cure our political evils, but it should also form the only fundamental aim of all our present efforts for a lasting political settlement with the British power in India. Such settlement is important not for itself, not as the political goal by itself, but as a necessary step to the real political goal which consists in the self-expression of the people in India in their own terms of political life. So the outward changes in the political government in India are bound to remain something like a shadow without a substance if they are not directly followed by an inward upliftment of the people utilising those changes in the interest of their national self-expression. The political upliftment of India, therefore, is not merely a matter for the political manipulation of external conditions; it is really an inward development of the people themselves towards adequate self-possession and self-expression.

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Similarly, if we carefully analyse the real

issues which make for the greater democratisation of Western governments and the greater stability of peace among them, we shall find that these issues are all ultimately pivoted on some new favourable development in the inward temper of men, both those who are in power and those who keep them there. It is this inner change, proceeding from depths of the human soul, that has first to translate itself into political and social changes in order that they may have any reality and effectiveness for all the good that they outwardly profess to bring out. And if without this prior, corresponding change in the human soul, beneficial effects are sought to be produced by cleverly working out changes in the mere external conditions of life, if real spiritual or moral upliftment is sought to be superseded by a clever manipulation of outward circumstances as means enough for any betterment in life, disappointment will be the sure outcome. For, "it is a change of the soul itself for the better," as Swamiji says, "that alone can cure the evils of life." The external mechanism of life can only use, but never create, any power for lasting human good. So this power comes from the soul of man, from a sincere aspiration of it alone. And if the nations of the West begin now to recognise this truth, and seek to cure by a sincere faith in soul-force their morbid reliance in all human affairs on the efficiency of mere mechanical force, then only the universal talk of peace to be established on a more stable footing among men may have some reality and force behind it, otherwise it is all mere cant of a political diplomacy bolstering up some appealing end to justify the terrible means it is using in the shape of millions of human lives in the cruel interests of a blood-thirsty political competition.

*It is a change of the soul itself for the better that alone can cure the evils of life.* This is the great truth from which men have gone astray all over the world. This is the great truth which has long been persistently ana-

gonised by the very spirit of the Western civilisation puffed up with an overweening confidence in the power of machines, of organisations, of man-made laws. The great ambition, the proud challenge of this civilisation has been to cure life of its evils by the clever manipulation of its external means. But God's truth cannot be thus cheated of its due, and evils seemingly disappearing from one part of the surface of modern life have been displaying unprecedented virulence in another, and nowhere has man been able to enrich himself more than his predecessor in olden times in the real peace and the lasting treasures of the soul. In fact, to such a sad pass has the world been brought by Western civilisation with its proud stolid neglect of the human soul and its dynamic potentialities, its blind worship of mechanistic forces in preference to forces born of spiritual upliftment, that the greatest service, it seems, that any individual can render to humanity to-day is to live a life of vigorous protest against this grinding, soulless civilisation! It was to counteract the dangerous influences of this civilisation seeking to mechanise the whole of human life that Swami Vivekananda preached with such invariable insistence the doctrine of the Atman all over the world. For it is the practical unbelief in this doctrine that makes men build too much on the means of life, live too much on shadows and appearances instead of on the only reality of the Atman.

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Full of simplicity and grandeur, full of unfailing inspiration for all the greatest effort and achievement in human thought and science, full of ultimate significance and authority for all that spirit of democracy and peace which the whole world is longing to imbibe, this doctrine of One Atman coming out as a bombshell from the Vedic revelation is sure to destroy all the brutal tendencies with which a mechanistic civilisation is vitiating the very springs of human life all over the world. It will open men's eyes to the only real source of all lasting improvement.

in life, and instead of staking all efforts and resources, for the sake of such improvements, on constant overhaulings in the external mechanism of life, men will value more and strive for changes "in the soul itself for the better," implying a greater and greater manifestation of the One Atman of all beings. For it is only by such spiritual upliftment that any real power for good can come behind human efforts, and unless this happens, it is quite useless and delusive for us to be looking expectantly to political or social changes to bring us any remedy for the evils of life. The question, therefore, with which we began, the question as to the real direction in which we must look for substantial changes for the better to come over human life in the world, is definitely answered. We must first watch for the spiritual upliftment of the people concerned before we expect real changes to come over their life to bring about any decided betterment in it.

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So in this psychological moment in world's history, when men are feeling in their mind the foreshadowings of some great change over human life, the most decisive premonition to look for is the coming of a spiritual urge in human hearts all over the world. Apart from the large arena of world problems, do we in India, who keenly watch for some solid improvement in the condition of our country in the immediate future, feel this divine urge towards an upliftment of the soul? There lies the crux of the whole problem for India. For in India, all the degeneration that we see to-day, all the satieties and miseries of self-disorganisation, are really due to that spiritual degeneration which loosened and snapped the bonds of *dharma* or duty that linked the more intelligent people to the less intelligent masses of the villages. It was certainly a spiritual degeneration that by exposing human nature so easily to the evils and lures of an alien education, made people in the villages so selfish as to break away for

personal advantages from the spiritual moorings of a polity of rural life which at that very critical period of its history, was looking up to these very men to tackle its new problems of self-adaptation created from within and without. But for this wanton breaking away of all the intelligence in the country from its old national moorings of *dharma*, India could have encountered, studied and dealt with the new forces of an alien civilisation without losing its own national poise and foot-hold,—self-possessed, self-conscious and self-united. But instead of this, India cut herself up in twain, one part—the educated classes—running away with ill-digested, ill-assorted ideas and ideals that blinded them to the old scheme of life, and the other part—the "uneducated" masses—left behind in the most selfish spirit of "devil take the hindmost" to struggle in moral and social disintegration without the light and leading which had never failed them through centuries. This intense collective selfishness of a section of the Indian people is ultimately ascribable only to a spiritual apostacy that made them traitors to the real nation in India, namely, her masses in the villages, and it is only by a spiritual outgoing of the very soul of educated India towards the long-neglected masses in the villages that this apostacy and all the evils of disorganisation that have followed in its wake can now be made amends for.

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How to develop in our hearts this *spiritual* richness and warmth of feeling for the masses? It is not by any means an easy acquisition, for it implies both a high order of patriotism and of spiritual achievement. When after a long itineracy as a lonely monk mostly among the neglected poor in India, Swami Vivekananda was met unexpectedly near Bombay by two of his wandering brother monks separated from him for long, among the very first glowing words that he uttered to them were the following: "Ah, brother,

I don't know I have mastered within me all the mystery they call religion, but this thing," (patting on his heart) "I see, has immensely broadened out." To this, the reply of the brother Sannyasin was, "Well, what else is religion? Why, you have rather become that very thing itself in flesh and blood!" After this, commenced that world-moving career of the great Sannyasin which from its start to finish may be said, in a very real sense, to have been essentially dedicated to the cause of the poor, the neglected and the down-trodden in India. The very underlying principle of all the schemes that he ever proposed in connection with the uplift of India was his great, flashing dictum that had best be blazoned forth in gold over all the public institutions of our country : "*The fate of a nation depends upon the condition of its masses.*" This ocean-wide, throbbing heart going out towards the helpless masses of his country was in Swamiji's case a wonderful spiritual achievement, and he has expressly bequeathed this new order of spirituality to his countrymen of this age. Shall we not strive our best to-day to acquire this spirituality so that those very changes, to which we so earnestly look forward and which are destined to raise the condition of our country by the most inevitable process, may be worked out through us as the proper instruments in the divine hands of the God of India.

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And if through our sincere individual strivings this new wave of spirituality rises to-

day in our midst, only then can the real work for India's uplift be started among the masses. Otherwise, if we simply approach them with the political shibboleths of the Western brand in our mouths, we shall never be able to inspire them with adequate enthusiasm for their duties as the real units of the Indian nation. And if these real units of the nation are not spiritually lifted up to the pursuit of what is their *dharma* towards the nation, all political manipulations of their external conditions in the hope of bringing about any betterment in their life are bound to prove worse than fruitless in the long run. So what we who live in the hope of India's uplift are required to do to-day is to dedicate to their cause all the spirituality we can acquire of the type represented in Swamiji's life and go to work among them to rekindle in their hearts the old burning sense of their *dharma* by precept and example, so that yoked by it again to the tasks of village improvement, their own initiative in rural self-government may weave out the larger web of real self-government for the whole of India. And the only real beginnings of this happy consummation lie, as we have seen, in the spiritual self-preparation and self-dedication of at least a few hundreds from among the many thousands of those in India who feel exalted to-day by the hope of coming changes calculated to usher in a happier future for their country. Will not even these few among the many respond to the call and devote themselves individually to this task of spiritual self-preparation?

### THE REAL PROBLEM FOR EDUCATION COMMISSIONS IN INDIA.

**I**T is a curious but undeniable fact that in spite of education commissions appointed by Government in India to advise it on educational matters, the real educational problem in India remains as unmooted and untackled as ever.

The last line in the terms of reference set forth in the Government resolution of the 14th Sept. 1917, which appointed the present Calcutta University Commission, runs thus : "and to recommend any changes of constitution, administration and educational policy

which may appear desirable." But from the questionnaire circulated by the Commission, we do not see that they have in view the consideration of any such possible change in the educational policy of the Government as may serve to remedy what we have described above as a most curious but undeniable fact.

Still, in view of the serious effort that is being made by the Commission to investigate and study the present educational situation in the country, the following observations concerning this situation and the problem it has created for the educationist, may be found to throw some light on questions which should have some indirect bearing at least on their important task.

The existing system of university education recognises in fact one ultimate source for all the knowledge it seeks to impart, and that is the *text-book*. The teacher's duty is to instil into the students' mind what the *text-book* contains, and so he dwells on the latter or otherwise tries to amplify it by more extensive references to kindred *text-books* or to intellectual developments of some points contained in them by his own thought. In any case, the knowledge that is imparted under the present system is all ultimately the knowledge derived from *text-books*. But in England, for instance, the knowledge imparted under her system of university education is knowledge ultimately derived from life, from experience, and *text-books* are only the convenient media for what actual life or experience has to give to the student. The English system has behind it as its lasting background the English life, both acting and reacting upon each other. And this English system of university education does not admit of being isolated from its background of English life and then imported into another country, for it then loses all its reality and becomes fossilised into the dead matter of *text-books*.

But this very contingency has been brought about in India by the importation of an English

system of university education, the necessity which mainly justified it being the demand of the British Government here for a constant supply of English-educated men for its various services. A similar supply had to be secured also in a large measure for foreign commercial firms established in India. In this way, the imported university education found itself correlated to new spheres of life created out of, or contiguous to, Government branches of administration and to foreign capitalist firms. The whole life of the country was, of course, profoundly affected by this newly created area superimposed upon it. But neither could the former fully re-adjust and re-arrange itself round this zone of new influences, nor could the latter affiliate itself as a part of the whole. And the reason of this lies in the patent fact that the old pre-British India had been evolved for untold centuries on the basis of an organic scheme of life and culture which it was impossible to twist, torture and fit into the new framework foisted upon it by the new ideals and methods of life embodied in the Western system of Government and its Western system of education. The inevitable consequences flowing from this forced juxtaposition of two mutually irreconcilable sets of cultural forces were, first, the growing disintegration of the whole life of the country, and secondly, the irredeemable artificiality of the bases of both the system of Government and the system of education it helped to set up. Efforts which the Government have been making to popularise the political system and so to remedy this artificiality which concerns themselves directly, require no mention here, but we would point out that the basic artificiality in the system of university education obtaining so long in the country is directly responsible for the growing demand among cultured Indians for what they call national education.

Now, therefore, what is the duty of the true educationist in India? He cannot hope

that the old India of a different scheme of life and a different type of culture will gradually die of inanition, for indications so far have all been to the contrary. And as this India is still living and seeking for self-expression with growing insistence and success, it will neither do to deal with it as we deal with specimens of the dead preserved in museums. That is to say, we should not rest satisfied merely with providing means at our universities for studying the bygone achievements of the ancient Indian culture. But we must be bold enough to recognise the old India with its own scheme of life and culture as still a living fact and factor, still resisting with marked success the cultural conquest of India by the West and fully capable yet of exerting decisive influence on the future of the whole country. However much impoverished in its material means of self-expression, in its crafts and industries, in its arts and sciences, its power is still regnant over millions of men in India, permeating their spiritual outlook on life, creating their deepest enthusiasms, standing sponsor for ever to their highest possibilities. The educationist in India, however officially or formally concerned only with the surface atmosphere of Western education created by the newly established universities, cannot surely afford to ignore this great force, namely, of a culture and a scheme of life that have moulded history in India for untold ages preserving themselves through world-shaking vicissitudes and political convulsions such as would certainly have extinguished the life of any civilisation similarly circumstanced.

Now if once the sincere educationist in India recognises this fact, namely, that the real life of India lies still unreconciled to that newly superimposed area on its surface which is both the creation of the existing system of university education and the only scope of its usefulness, he will easily be able to trace the only source of the vital defects in this system and the only way of removing them. He

will easily detect that the present university education is not at all correlated to the whole life of the country in its integrity, constantly reacting upon it and reacted upon by it in turn, but it is merely connected with an artificial section of that life, a section that has hardly any cultural affinity with the whole and instead of seeking to co-ordinate itself with the latter, serves rather to hasten its disintegration. Having some sort of interdependence only with such an artificial section of Indian life, the present system of university education can naturally never expect to have that reality and life which we find in its prototype in England. For here it draws its sap and sustenance not from the free-flowing stream of a whole people's life, its experiences and achievements; it nourishes itself upon the imported pabulum of text-books; and hardly anything more than that is necessary to train up people who have to work and live amidst artificial environments superimposed on the real life and culture of a country.

The plain duty of the educationist in India, therefore, is to strive to make the Indian university faithfully represent, focus and interpret all the cultural forces operating in the whole of Indian life, and thus to raise it to its true dignity and function. Long has the Indian university pursued the undignified course and the spurious function of blindly helping on the alienation of life against life. Now let it come forward to ally itself with the process of assimilating the new life to the old, so that the old cultural forces may be broadened and rendered fully self-conscious, and freely rise to absorb as part of their being the new healthy forces that have come to stay in India.

The general principles to be applied to bring about this salutary change in the attitude and function of the Indian university, it is not much difficult to indicate. The university when taking up the education of the child should definitely aim at establishing him first of all in the spirit of the old Indian

culture. Both by reference to the ideal in thought and the actual in surrounding life, a clear indication of the spirit must accompany the introduction of the child to his first study of language, history and science. Both the teacher and the text-book must have this purpose clearly in view. And then when the student has been initially established as far as possible in the spirit of the old Indian culture, and is now being introduced through a course of secondary and higher education to different areas of Western thought and culture, let him be trained up to use always his faculty of comparison, assimilation and discrimination, so that as he grows he may develop in thought both the scheme of life in all its aspects and phases as it obtains in India and the parallel scheme of life as it obtains in the West. Thus all the points of contact and contrast in the two systems of life and culture should be matter of knowledge to the grown-up student, and the university should provide him scope for studying

how actual life in India fulfils its various functions in art, agriculture, economics, politics, science and so on, conformably to the spirit and purpose of her own culture. So also in the study of life in the West the student of the Indian university will be enabled to make constant, fruitful reference to the actualities and needs of the life in his own country. In order to enable its students to work and live in the fullest and the most real environment of thought and culture, the university must connect itself with regional cultures and cultural regions supplying them new impetus and encouragement and interpreting their past achievements and future possibilities. Thus the university must go out and diffuse its influence and usefulness all over the country through local institutions for study and instruction, for give-and-take dealings. Then only can the Indian university be made to faithfully represent, focus and interpret all the cultural forces operating in the whole of India.

### EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

( *Translated from Bengali.* )

#### CXXXI.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna !

C/o George W. Hale,  
541, Dearborn Avenue,  
Chicago.  
19th March, 1894.

My dear—

I have not written to you since coming to this country. But Haridas Bhai's\* letter gives me all the news. It is excellent that

\* Haridas Bhai—Ex-Dewan of Junagarh. Shortly before Swamiji left India for America, he became intimately acquainted with this gentleman, and was introduced by him to many Indian princes.

G. C. Ghose † and all of you have treated him with due consideration.

I have no wants in this country, but mendicancy has no vogue here and I have to labour, that is, lecture in places. It is as cold here as it is hot. The summer is not a bit less hot than in Calcutta. And how to describe the cold in winter ! The whole country is covered in snow, three or four feet deep, nay, six or seven feet, at places ! In the Southern parts there is no snow. Snow, however, is a thing of little consideration here. For it snows when the mercury stands at 32° F. In Calcutta it scarcely comes down to 60°

† G. C. Ghose—the great actor-dramatist of Bengal, and a staunch devotee of Sri Ramakrishna.

and it rarely approaches zero in England. But here, your mercury sinks to *minus 40°* or *50°*. In Canada, in the North, mercury becomes condensed, when they have to use the alcohol thermometer. When it is too cold, that is, when the mercury stands even below *20° F.* it does not snow. I used to think that it must be an exceedingly cold day on which the snow falls. But it is not so, it snows on comparatively warm days. Extreme cold produces a sort of intoxication. No carriages would run; only the sledge, which is without wheels, slides on the ground! Everything is frozen stiff— even an elephant can walk on rivers and canals and lakes. The massive Falls of Niagara, of such tremendous velocity, are frozen to marble!! But I am doing nicely. I was a little afraid at first, but later on, necessity makes me travel by rail to the borders of Canada one day, and the next day finds me lecturing in South America! The carriages are kept quite warm, like your own room, by means of steam pipes, and all around are masses of snow, spotlessly white,— O the beauty of it!

I was mortally afraid that my nose and ears would fall off, but to this day they are all right. I have to go out, however, dressed in a heap of warm clothing, surmounted by a fur-coat, with boots, encased in an woollen jacket, and so on. No sooner you breathe out, than it freezes among the beard and moustache! Notwithstanding all this, the fun of it is that they won't drink water indoors without putting a lump of ice into it. This is, because it is warm indoors. Every room and staircase are kept warm by steam pipes. They are first and foremost in arts and appliances, foremost in enjoyment and luxury, foremost in making money, and foremost in spending it. The daily wages of a coolie are six rupees, as also are those of a servant; you cannot hire a cab for less than three rupees, nor get a cigar for less than four annas. A decent pair of shoes costs twenty-four rupees, and a suit, rupees five hundred. As

they earn, so they spend. A lecture fetches from two hundred up to three thousand rupees. I have got up to five hundred.† Of course now I am in the very heyday of fortune. They like me, and thousands of people come to hear me speak.

So it pleased the Lord, I met here Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. He was very cordial at first, but when the whole Chicago population began to flock to me in overwhelming numbers, then grew the cancer in \_\_\_\_'s mind! \* \* \* The priests tried their utmost to snub me. But the Guru is with me, what could anybody do? And the whole American nation loves and respects me, pays my expenses, and reveres me as a Guru..... It was not in the power of your priests to do anything against me. Moreover, they are a nation of scholars. Here it would no longer do to say, "We marry our widows," "we do not worship idols," and things of that sort. What they want is philosophy, learning, and empty talk will no more do.

D— is a nice boy. He has not much of learning, but is very gentle. He had a good deal of popularity in this country.

Brother, I have been brought to my senses.... "ये निश्चन्त पराहिने निरथंकं ते के न जानीसह !"— We do not know what sort of people they are, who for nothing hinder the welfare of others. (Bhartrihari) Brother, we can get rid of everything, but not of that cursed jealousy.... That is a national sin with us, speaking ill of others, and burning at heart at the greatness of others. Mine alone is the greatness, none else should rise to it !!

Nowhere in the world are women like those of this country. How pure, independent, self-relying and kind-hearted ! It is the

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† For some time after the Chicago Address Swamiji lectured on behalf of a Lecture Bureau, which task, however, he soon gave up as curtailing his independence, and devoted most of the money thus earned to various charitable works in different parts of India.

women who are the life and soul of this country. All learning and culture are centred in them. The saying "या श्रीः स्वतं सुकृतानां भवनेषु"—Who is the Goddess of Fortune Herself in the families of the meritorious--holds good in this country, while that other, "पापात्मनां हृदयेष्वलक्ष्मीः"—The Goddess of ill-luck in the hearts of the sinful—applies to ours. Just think on this. Great God ! I am struck dumb with wonderment at seeing the women of America,—“त्वं श्रीस्त्वमीभ्यर्थी त्वं हीः” etc.—Thou art the Goddess of Fortune, Thou art the supreme Goddess, Thou art Modesty. “आ देवी सर्वभूतेषु शक्तिरूपेण संस्थिता” etc.—The Goddess who resides in all beings as Power. All this holds good here. There are thousands of women here, whose minds are as pure and white as the snow of this country. And look at our girls, becoming mothers below their teens !! Good Lord ! I now see it all. Brother, “यत्र नार्थस्तु पृथग्नन्ते नन्दनन्ते तत्र देवताः”—The gods are pleased where the women are held in esteem.—Says the old Manu. We are horrible sinners ; and our degradation is due to our calling women ‘despicable worms,’ ‘gateways to Hell,’ and so forth. Goodness gracious ! There is all the difference between heaven and hell !! “याथातद्यतोऽर्थात् अद्यधाति ।” —He adjudges gifts according to the merits of the case. Is the Lord to be hoodwinked by idle talk ? The Lord has said, “त्वं स्त्री त्वं उमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कमारी”—Thou art the woman, Thou art man, Thou art the boy and the girl as well. (Swetaswatra Upa.) And we on our part are crying, “दूर्मपसर रे चराङ्गाल”—Be off, thou outcast ! “केनेषा निर्मिता नारी मांहिनी” &c.—Who has made the bewitching woman ? My brother, what experiences I have had in the South of the upper classes torturing the lower ! What bacchanalian orgies within the temples ! Is it a religion that fails to remove the misery of the poor and turn men into gods ! Do you think our religion is worth the name ? Ours is only Don't-touchism, only “Touch me not,” “Touch me not.” Good heavens ! a country, the big leaders of

which have for the last two thousand years been only discussing whether to take food with the right hand or the left, whether to take water from the righthand side or from the left,.....if such a country does not go to ruin what else will ? “कालः द्वृष्टेषु जागर्ति काले हि द्वृतिक्रमः”—Time keeps wide awake when all else are asleep ; Time is invincible indeed ! He knows it ; who is there to throw dust in His eyes, my friend ?

A country where millions of people live on flowers of the *mohua* plant, and a million or two of Sadhus and a hundred million or so of Brahmins suck the blood out of these poor people, without even the least effort for their amelioration—is that a country or hell ? Is that a religion, or the devil's dance ? My brother, here is one thing for you to understand fully,—I have travelled all over India, and seen this country too—can there be an effect without cause ? Can there be punishment without sin ?

“सर्वास्त्वपुराणेषु व्यासस्य वचनं धृतं ।  
परोपकारस्त्वं पुण्याय पापाय परपैडनम् ।”

—Amidst all the scriptures and Puranas, know this statement of Vyasa to be true, that doing good to others conduces to merit, and doing harm to them leads to sin.

Isn't it true ?

My brother, in view of all this, specially, of the poverty and ignorance, I got no sleep. At Cape Comorin sitting in Mother Kumari's temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock,—I hit upon a plan : We are so many Sannyasins wandering about, and teaching the people metaphysics,—it is all madness. Did not our Gurudeva use to say, 'An empty stomach is no good for religion' ? That those poor people are leading the life of brutes, is simply due to ignorance. We have for all ages been sucking their blood and trampling them under foot.

\* \* Suppose some disinterested Sannyasins, bent on doing good to others, go from village to village, disseminating education, and seeking in various ways to better the

condition of all down to the Chandâla, through oral teaching, and by means of maps, cameras, globes and such other accessories,—can't that bring forth good in time? All these plans I cannot write out in this short letter. The long and short of it is—if the mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must to the mountain. The poor are too poor to come to schools and *pâthsâlîs*, and they will gain nothing by reading poetry and all that sort of thing. We as a nation have lost our individuality and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and *raise the masses*. The Hindu, the Mahomedan, the Christian all have trampled them under foot. Again the force to raise them must come from inside, that is, from the orthodox Hindus. In every country the evils exist not with, but against, Religion. Religion therefore is not to blame, but men.

To effect this, the first thing we need is men, and the next is funds. Through the grace of our Guru I was sure to get from ten to fifteen men in every town. I next travelled in search of funds, but do you think the people of India were going to spend money!! \* \* Selfishness personified—are they to spend anything! Therefore I have come to America, to earn money myself, and then return to my country and devote the rest of my days to the realisation of this one aim of my life.

As our country is poor in social virtues, so this country is lacking in spirituality. I give them spirituality and they give me money. I do not know how long I shall take to realise my end. \* \* These people are not hypocrites, and jealousy is altogether absent in them. I depend on no one in Hindusthan. I shall try to earn the whereabouts myself to the best of my might and carry out my plans, or die in the attempt. "सत्त्वमिति वरं त्यागो विनाशे नियते सति।"—When death is certain, it is best to sacrifice oneself for a good cause.

You may perhaps think what Utopian nonsense all this is! You little know what is in me. If any of you help me in my plans, all right, or Gurudeva will show me the way out. \* \* We cannot give up jealousy and rally together. That is our national sin!! It is not to be met with in this country, and this is what has made them so great.

Nowhere in the world have I come across such 'frogs-in-the-well' as we are. Let anything new come from some foreign country, and America will be the first to accept it. But we?—O, there are none like us in the world, we men of Aryan blood!! Where that heredity really comes up, I do not see. \* \* Yet they are descendants of the Aryans!

Ever yours,

Vivekananda.

## FOREST SCHOOLS OF ANCIENT INDIA.

BY SISTER DEVAMATA.

THE natural university of the early Indo-Aryans was the forest. No college campus or cathedral close could offer so still a retreat as was to be found under the high-arching trees of the jungle besides some cool-flowing stream. It was Nature's own cloister made for the student. And here the teacher lived in humble retirement, accepting the pupils who came to him as his own; clothing

them, feeding them, caring for them like sons, and sharing with them whatever of plenty or privation was his. Even the richest were not allowed to pay for their tuition: to impart knowledge as a means of livelihood was regarded in those days as a dishonor, unsuiting the teacher for his task. Did not Truth belong to God, how could it be sold by man? Every child was taken as a

sacred charge. Nor did it matter whether few came or many. The schoolroom with its carpet of soft moss and roof of overlapping branches was elastic and could be stretched to any limit. There were also bamboo poles and palm leaves in plenty for the walls and thatch of a new dormitory.

To this secluded woodland college the father brought his boys at the age of eight or ten and surrendered them without reserve to the guidance of the teacher. During the years of schooling there must be no conflict of authority, no counteracting influences. As home and parents had possessed the toddling child, giving him his first lessons by sacred song and story; now at the outset of a new period the boy must be carried into a specialized environment, to live beside one whose whole thought was consecrated to the pursuit of knowledge and whose earnest exalted life was the chief text-book spread open before the scholar's awakening mind. The nursery time was over and the moment came for the graver duties of *Brahmacharya*—service and study. These two factors were given equal place in the daily routine; although, if anything, service received the greater emphasis, as it did in the system of apprenticeship during the Middle Ages. Those wise men of the forest knew that only he who can make himself a servant is ready to receive so great a thing as Truth.

We read in the Chhandogya-Upanishad that when Satyakama came to a sage begging for instruction, he was given four hundred lean cows and told to drive them to a distant pasture and keep them until the drove had multiplied to a thousand. Evidently the deep-seeing eyes of the master discerned that the boy's heart was ripe for solitude and contemplation, hence there could be no better preparatory training than that which would be gained on the high stretches of a lonely mountainside. And so truly did experience bear out his judgment that when at last the patient student, his task accomplished, returned once more to the hermitage, the master greeted him with the words: "Friend, your face shines like one who knows the Truth." Education, as those ancient teachers conceived it, meant primarily a process of purification, a removal of that within, which barred the way of knowledge inherent in every human being; and this was most quickly achieved by the lowlier activities of the common life. Also in this way a more familiar

relation was established and it was believed that the lessons learned through close personal contact between teacher and pupil were of greater value than those taught during class hours—just as more of birds can be learned by one walk through the woods with an ornithologist than in many recitations behind four walls.

Nor was the feminine element lacking in those woodland cloisters: for nearly every forest school had its mother, and the dripping vessel of cold water from the lake or the fagots of wood from the jungle were as often for her needs beside the hearth as for the sacrificial rites of the master before the altar. Now and then, too, her softer heart would plead against the stern discipline of her husband. Thus was it in the house of Satyakama Jabala, after he had become a teacher. When a certain student, Upakosala, had dwelt with him for twelve years patiently serving, his wife made appeal to the master: "This boy is quite exhausted with service. He has carefully tended your fires. Let not the fires themselves blame you, but teach him." Yet Satyakama went away on a journey without having taught him and the boy from sheer grieving could not eat. Then the wife approached him with tender concern, saying: "Student, eat! Why do you not eat?" And the boy replied: "I am full of sorrows and shall take no food." The record makes no further mention of her, but it is evident that she revived his drooping spirits; for soon he returned to his service and out of the fire, which he had so faithfully tended, he heard a voice revealing the knowledge which the master had withheld—perhaps because this final test was necessary to prepare the pupil to grasp it.

The courses of study in these schools were not unlike those followed in the nascent mediaeval universities of the Occident,—a classic instruction with a dominant background of religion. But while in the West religion during that scholastic period was theological and verbose, in Vedic India it tended away from dogma towards silent independent research. The method of imparting instruction also was not the dialectic method of mediaeval Europe, but rather the dialogic method adopted later in Greece by Socrates and Plato. All branches of secular learning in the Indo-Aryan curriculum were classed as "lower knowledge," or the preparatory stage, while "higher knowledge" was defined

as "that by which the Indestructible is apprehended." The chief aim of their study was to reach an ultimate generalization, because they saw that without an understanding of the Final Cause no explanation of the universe could be stable or conclusive. And the student should be so trained that he would be able to apprehend this for himself. Education which merely gave information about things was in their opinion superficial and incomplete. Learning, in other words, was not accepted as a substitute for direct vision. A father, for example, chides a son, who being asked "What is God?" replies with long passages from the Scriptures defining Deity. "That is enough," he says sternly. "You have evidently profited little by your schooling."

Another youth after spending twelve years in the teacher's house returns home self-satisfied and "considering himself well-read." His father deals a telling blow at his pride by putting the question: "My son, since you are so conceited and think yourself so well-informed, have you ever asked for that instruction by which one hears what cannot be heard, perceives what cannot be perceived, knows what cannot be known?" And the youth, humiliated, is forced to admit his ignorance. Also a book-wise Brahmin, who comes again and again to a court offering to teach the king, is told; "Go and learn." Each time, puzzled by the rebuff, he plunges deeper into his study, until at last the true meaning of knowledge bursts upon him and, grown humble, he stays at home. Then the King comes to seek him and asks to be taught of him.

In the Vedic system three distinct stages in the acquisition of knowledge were recognized:—hearing, reflection, and realisation. The first was the period of theory; the second, of experiment and proof; the third, of definite knowledge. In the terms of an educational curriculum, these might be classed as the preparatory school, the college and the final specialized work of the university. The method employed in the last two was strictly empirical. Present day science is not more rigidly exacting in its demands that all statements rest on direct observation and experiment than were those ancient instructors. Thus when Svetaketu is being taught by his own father regarding the True, he is told to bring a fruit of the Nyagrodha tree and break it. "It is broken, Sir." "What do you see

there?" "These seeds, almost infinitesimal." "Break one of them." "It is broken, Sir." "What do you see there?" "Not anything, Sir." Then the sage drives home the lesson: "My son, that subtle essence which you do not perceive, of that very essence this great Nyagrodha tree exists. Out of this subtle essence springs all life. It is the True and thou art It." Then the youth craves to know more and he is told to put some salt in water and leave it until the morning. On the morrow the salt of course could not be seen and the father tells him to taste the water from the bottom, from the surface, from the middle. "How is it?" he inquires. "It is salt everywhere." "Throw it away." The son does so and as the water dries up the salt lies, a white deposit, on the ground. Again a lesson: "Now also in this body, forsooth, you do not perceive the True, my son; but it is always there." Could there be a more vivid tangible demonstration of the reality of the unseen Soul or of God?

Thus in the laboratory of nature did they study the hidden facts of life. But it may be objected that this does not bear the character of true scientific analysis. It is rather a moral lesson. So it seems to the Western mind; but to the Indo-Aryan there was no distinction between physical and metaphysical, moral and material. God and Soul were as much objects of empiric study, as were unknown substances in chemistry or the rock strata of geology. For them there was no limit to the area of exact science. It must reach to the very end of creation. And if they seemed often to proceed by inference and analogy, so also does the modern scientist when he frames a fresh hypothesis based on the observation of some new and unexplained operation in Nature. This stage, moreover, was wholly primary in their scheme of education and the student was not expected to stop until he had found an original demonstration for every theorem thus propounded. In the ancient writings we find it recorded that the master sometimes did no more than repeat the initial equation each time the pupil returned with an answer, and the student was thus led on and on until wholly by his own thought processes he reached an ultimate solution.

The man of science, however, must have instruments, it may be said. Yes, and those age-old teachers knew it as well as the instructors of to-day;

but almost at the outset they made the valuable discovery that nature had provided every human being with an instrument of wider range and more delicate adjustment than any man could make with his own hands,—the instrument of the human mind; and the aim of all their instruction was to give their pupils a thorough command of this. Therefore the pupil was trained in concentration, meditation and intravision as to-day we are taught the use of microscope or telescope. Nor was this a mere idle subjective theory. There can be no doubt of its practical validity; for centuries before the Christian era we find these wise forest-masters teaching virtually all the axiomatic truths of modern science,—the equilibrium of forces, the indestructibility of matter, the uniformity of law, and the vital fact of evolution. Also they had a remarkable understanding of the human organism, its control and use. How did they discern these things? By studying Nature they discovered that the swifter and finer the vibration, the greater the penetrative force: and since focussed thought was the swiftest and finest vibration known, it should be able to pierce the densest veil of matter. Working on this hypothesis, they soon discovered that creation was a loosely woven mesh, easily penetrated by the trained and subtle gaze. This makes plain why in their system of education such stress was laid on the rigid discipline of body, mind and senses, for these were the student's instruments and must be well-tempered.

In those ancient days there was no break in the course of study. The school merged automatically into the university. It was customary for the scholars to remain in their teacher's house for eight, ten or twelve years. At the expiration of that term the father came to take his sons, leaving a thank-offering had he wealth. But often it happened that among the sons some one showed such aptitude for study that he remained longer with the teacher, and in the course of time he might even build his own bamboo hut and settle permanently in the jungle. Thus round the nucleus of a simple school-master's thatched cottage there grew up extended seats of learning. Often, too, scholars in advanced grades came. Thus only ripe and thoughtful minds could have formulated such questions as appear at the outset of one of the sacred records of the time: "Whence are we born, whereby do we

live and whither do we go? Should time, or Nature, or necessity, or chance, or the elements be the cause, or He who is called the Supreme Person (the Personal God or the Creator)? Or is the Absolute the cause?" Also that more ancient pupil in the Rig-Veda must have passed beyond the primary grade when he begged to be taught "that, knowing which all else is known." In another record we read that Narada approached the venerable Sanatkumara and said: "Teach me, Sir." And Sanatkumara replied: "Please tell me what you already know; afterward I shall tell you what comes after." Narada then enumerates the studies he has completed: "I know the four Vedas, Grammar, the rules for certain sacrifices, the science of numbers, the science of portents and of time, logic, ethics, etymology, pronunciation, ceremonial and prosody, the science of weapons, astronomy, and the fine arts (the making of perfumes, dancing, singing, playing, etc.). But, Sir, with all this I know the Sacred Books only, I do not know the Self or Spirit within." And the master replies: "Whatever you have read is a name only."

This strikes the keynote of all ancient Indo-Aryan teaching. The knowledge of this world was by no means despised. On the contrary, nowhere was learning more eagerly cultivated; but the pupil was never allowed to forget that without the illuminating flash of Soul-consciousness, all was but a dead letter, a lightless lantern. And his craving for the higher attainment was fired by such promises as this: "If you were to tell this truth to a dry stick, branches would grow and leaves spring from it." Or again: "If a man knows the underlying Truth of all things here, that is the true end of life. The wise who have thought on all things and discovered the Divine Essence in them, attain immortality." "He who knows Him who has no beginning and no end, in the midst of chaos, creating all things, having many forms, alone enveloping everything, is freed from all fetters." What wonder that, with such words of hope ringing in their ears, young men lingered year after year in some quiet retreat striving with heightening fervor to plunge deeper and deeper into the hidden recesses of knowledge? Thus the forests became populous with men—and women too—afame with the desire to know that ultimate unit by knowing

which all else would become plain. Sometimes they gathered into groups called hermitages, which grew to number many hundreds. Bodily needs were reduced to the simplest formula in order that the major portion of time and energy might be devoted to the quest of Truth. They married, but with the lofty aim of creating the best possible environment and conditions for enlightened souls to incarnate; and it is said that children were born among them with such aptitude for knowledge that even in tender years they attained super-conscious vision.

Nor was their life over-grave and joyless. The note struck in a hymn of the Rig-Veda :—“Let the oxen work merrily, let the men work merrily, let the plough move on merrily, fasten the traces merrily,” is characteristic of all true Vedic teaching. The West regards it as pessimistic because it sets small value on those things which the Occident prizes, just as to a boy the grown-up who prefers a lonely walk to base-ball or cricket seems a misanthrope. But whoever takes delight in his task is

an optimist, and no people ever found deeper delight in any labor than did the Indo-Aryan in his search after the Ultimate Reality. Could a dejected heart have given voice to that verse of the Vedas : “Out of joy the universe has come, in joy it lives and back to joy it goes”? In the scheme of life developed by the Aryans of India we find no conflict of ideals, no contradictions or inconsistencies. The home, the school and the temple all faced in the same direction. There was as natural an orientation in the performance of the homely tasks of the household as in the setting up of an altar, and no scholar ever began his schooling without bowing before the family shrine and invoking the blessings of the Most High. The goal of all their efforts was one, which may be summed up in the words spoken by a saintly teacher to a worthy pupil in the Chhandogya-Upanishad : “The Infinite is bliss. There is no true bliss in anything finite. The Infinite alone is bliss. This Infinite, however, we must desire to understand.”

—*The Message of the East.*

### VIVEKACHUDAMANI.

(Continued from page 19)

**ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्येत्यवरुपो विनिश्चयः ।  
सोऽयं नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः समुदाहृतः ॥२०॥**

20 A firm conviction of the mind to the effect that Brahman is real and the universe unreal is designated as the discrimination (Viveka) between the real and the unreal.

**तद्वैराग्यं जिह्वासा या दर्शनश्चवणादिभिः ।  
देहादिब्रह्मपर्यन्ते हनित्ये भोगवस्तुनि ॥२१॥**

21. Vairagya or renunciation is the desire to give up all transitory enjoyments (ranging) from those of an (animate) body to those of Brahmanhood, (having already known their defects) from observation, instruction and so forth.

**[From those.....Brahmāhood.—Brahmā is the highest being in the scale of relative existence. The seeker after Freedom has to transcend this scale, undetained by enjoyments implying subject-object relation, and realise his Self as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.]**

Having already known etc.—दर्शनश्चवणादिभिः may also be rendered as, “(the giving up being effected) through all the enjoying organs and faculties.” ]

**विरज्य विषयवातादोषहप्त्या मुहुर्मुहुः ।  
खलश्ये नियतावस्था मनसः राम उच्यते ॥२२॥**

22. The resting of the mind steadfastly on its Goal (viz. Brahman) after having detached itself from the manifold of sense-objects by continually observing their defects, is called Sama or calmness,

विषयेभ्यः परावर्त्य स्थापनं स्वस्वरूपोत्तके ।  
उभयेषामिन्द्रियाणां स दद्यः परिकीर्तिः ।  
बाह्यानालम्बनं वृत्तेरेषोपरतिरुक्तमा ॥२३॥

23. Turning both kinds of sense-organs away from sense-objects and placing them in their respective centres is called Dama or self-control. The best Uparati or self-withdrawal consists in the mind-function ceasing to act by means of external objects.

[ Both kinds of organs—viz. The organs of knowledge and those of action. ]

सहनं सर्वदुःखानामप्रतीकारपूर्वकम् ।  
चिन्ताविलापरहितं सा तितिक्षा निगद्यते ॥२४॥

24. The bearing of all afflictions without caring to redress them, being free ( at the same time ) from anxiety or lament on their score, is called Titiksha or forbearance.

शास्त्रस्य गुरुवाक्यस्य सत्यवृद्ध्यवधारणम् ।  
सा श्रद्धा कथिता सर्विर्यया वस्तूपलभ्यते ॥२५॥

25. Acceptance by firm judgment of the mind as true of what the scriptures and the Guru instruct, is called by the sages Sraddhā or faith, by means of which the Reality is perceived,

[ Acceptance by firm judgment etc.—Not to be confused with what is generally called blind acceptance. The whole mind must attain to that perfect state of assured reliance on the truth of instructions received, without which a whole-hearted, one-pointed practice of those instructions is not possible. ]

सर्वदा स्थापनं बुझेः शुद्धे ब्रह्मग्णि सर्वदा ।  
तत्समाधानमित्युक्तं न तु चित्तस्य जालमम् ॥२६॥

26. Not the mere indulgence of thought ( in curiosity ) but the constant concentration of the intellect ( or the affirming faculty ) on the ever-pure Brahman is what is called Samādhāna or self-settledness.

[ Not the mere indulgence etc.—That is, not the mere intellectual or philosophical satisfaction in

thinking of or studying the Truth. The intellect must be sought to be resolved into the higher activity of concentration on the Truth. ]

अहंकारादिदेहान्तान् बन्धानज्ञानकल्पितान् ।  
स्वस्वरूपावयवांधेन मोक्षमिच्छा मुमुक्षुता ॥२७॥

27. Mumukshutā or yearning for freedom is the desire to free oneself, by realising one's true nature, from all bondages from that of egoism to that of the body,—bondages super-imposed by Ignorance.

मन्दमध्यमरूपापि वैराग्येण शमादिना ।  
प्रसादेन गुरोः संयं प्रवृद्धा सूयते फलम् ॥२८॥

28. Even though torpid or mediocre, this yearning for freedom, through the grace of the Guru, may bear fruit ( being developed ) by means of Vairagya ( renunciation ), Sama ( calmness ), and so on.

वैराग्यं च मुमुक्षुत्वं तीव्रं यस्य तु विद्यते ।  
तस्मिन्नेवार्थवन्तः स्युः फलवन्तः शमादयः ॥२९॥

29. In his case verily whose Renunciation and yearning for freedom are intense, calmness and the other practices have ( really ) their meaning and bear fruit.

एतयोर्मन्दता यत्र विरक्तत्वमुमुक्ष्योः ।  
मरौ सलिलवृत्तत्र शमादेर्भानमात्रता ॥३०॥

30. Where ( however ) this Renunciation and yearning for freedom are torpid, there calmness and the other practices are as mere appearances, like water in a desert !

[ Merely appearances etc.—i. e. they are without any stability and may vanish like the mirage any time. For without burning renunciation and desire for Freedom, the other practices may be swept off by a strong impulse of मोह or some strong blind attachment. ]

मोक्षकारणसामग्र्यां भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ।  
स्वस्वरूपानुसन्धानं भक्तिरित्यमिधीयते ॥३१॥

31. Among things conducive to Liberation, Devotion ( Bhakti ) alone holds the supreme

place. The seeking after one's real nature is designated as Devotion.

[*The seeking etc.*—This definition is from the Advaita standpoint. Dualists who substitute Isvara, the Supreme Lord, for the Atman or Supreme Self immanent in being, of course define Bhakti otherwise. For example, Narada defines it as सा कर्मचित् परमप्रेमरूपा—“It is of the nature of extreme love to some Being,” and Sandilya, another authority on the subject, puts it as सा परातुरकरीभरे—“It is extreme attachment to Isvara, the Lord.” On reflection it will appear that there is not much difference between the definitions of the two schools.]

स्वात्मतत्त्वानुसन्धानं भक्तिरित्यपरे जगुः ।  
उक्तसाधनसंपन्नस्तत्त्वजिज्ञासुरात्मनः ।  
उपसीदेद्गुरुं प्राङ्मयस्माद्बन्धविमोक्षणम् ॥३२॥

32. Others maintain that the inquiry into the truth of one's own Self is Devotion. The inquirer about the truth of the Atman who is possessed of the above-mentioned means of attainment should approach a wise preceptor, who confers emancipation from bondage.

[*Truth of one's own self &c.*—This is simply putting the statement of the previous Sloka in another way, for we are the Atman in reality, though ignorance has veiled the truth from us.

*Above-mentioned*—i. e. in Slokas 19 and 31.]

ओत्रियोऽवृजिनोऽकामहतो यो ब्रह्मवित्तमः ।  
ब्रह्मगुपरतः शान्तो निरन्धन इवानन्तः ।  
अहेतुकदयासिन्धुर्बन्धुरानमतां सताम् ॥३३॥

33. Who is versed in the Vedas, sinless, unsmitten by desire and a knower of Brahman par excellence, who has withdrawn himself into Brahman, calm, like fire that has consumed its fuel, who is a boundless reservoir of mercy that knows no reason, and a friend of all good people who prostrate themselves before him;—

[*Fire....fuel.*—Cf. Svetasvatara, VI. 19. The state of mergence in Brahman, and the perfect cessation of all activity of the relative plane is meant.

The Sloka is an adaptation of the language of Srutis.]

तमाराध्य गुरुं भक्त्या प्रह्लपश्चयसेवनैः ।  
प्रसन्नं तमनुप्राप्य पृच्छेज्ञातव्यमात्मनः ॥३४॥

34. Worshipping that Guru with devotion, and approaching him, when he is pleased with prostration, humility and service, ( he ) should ask him what he has got to know.

स्वामिन्नमस्ते न तलोकवन्धो  
कारुण्यसिन्धो पतितं भवान्धौ ।  
मामुद्धरात्मीयकाक्षद्वष्ट्या  
ऋज्यातिकारुण्यसुधाभिवृष्ट्या ॥३५॥

35. “O Master, O friend of those that bow to thee, thou ocean of mercy, I bow to thee ; save me, fallen as I am into this sea of birth and death, with a straightforward glance of thine eye, which sheds nectar-like grace supreme.

[The expression, abounding in hyperbole, is characteristically Oriental. The meaning is quite plain.]

तुर्वारसंसारदवाग्नितं  
दोधूयमानं तुरहप्तवाते:  
भीतं प्रपञ्चं परिपाहि मृत्योः  
शरण्यमन्यदहं न जाने ॥३६॥

36. “Save me from death, afflicted as I am by the unquenchable fire of this world-forest, and shaken violently by the winds of an untoward lot, terrified and ( so ) seeking refuge in thee, for I do not know of any other man with whom to seek shelter.

[*Forest-fire &c.*—The world (*Samsdra*) is commonly compared to a wilderness on fire. The physical and mental torments are referred to.

*Untoward lot*—the aggregate of bad deeds done in one's past incarnations, which bring on the evils of the present life.]

शान्ता महान्तो निवसन्ति सन्तो  
वसन्तवल्लोकहितं चरन्तः ।

**तीर्णाः स्वयं भीमभवार्णवं जना-  
नहेतुनान्यानपि तारयन्तः ॥३७॥**

37. "There are good souls calm and magnanimous, who do good to others as does the spring, and who having themselves crossed this dreadful ocean of birth and death, help others also to cross the same, without any motive whatsoever.

[*Do good.....spring*—i. e. unasked, out of their heart's bounty, as the spring infuses new life into animate and inanimate nature, unobserved and unsought. The next Sloka follows up the idea.]

**अयं स्वभावः स्वत एव यत्पर-  
थ्रमापनोदप्रवणं महात्मनाम् ।**

**सुधांशुरेष स्वयमर्ककर्कश-  
प्रभाभितसामवति चिरिति किल ॥३८॥**

38. "It is the very nature of the magnanimous to move of their own accord towards removing others' troubles. Here, for instance, is the moon who, as everybody knows, voluntarily saves the earth parched by the flaming rays of the sun.

(To be continued.)

## REVIEWS.

1. *Aggressive Hinduism*, by the Sister Nivedita of Rk.-V. Published by Brahmachari Ganendranath, Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta. Price Annas 4.

The reading public, that section specially of it which is ever on the look-out for recorded words that inspire, enoble and create the will to achieve nobly in life, will feel much beholden to the publisher for his bringing out this booklet again to the light of day. The Sister Nivedita stands in the front rank of those Indian workers in Time's vineyard through whom the mighty process becomes self-conscious, the process by which "the old order changeth yielding place to new." And yet it is the old that comes out to live over again as *the new*. The distinction there is surely, but the transfiguration is no less clear and sure. With this true spirit of healthy transition actuating the movement of all her thoughts on India's future, Sister Nivedita's glowing words of faith, her masterly statements of truth, her facile expressions, make the four little essays which comprise the pamphlet a luminous philosophy of our present duties, an inspiring revelation of our future possibilities. What with the striking cheapness of its price,—and the value and indispensableness of the words written in it, we hope the little book will find its way into the hands of all readers of English

who want sincerely to think and work for India and her future.

2. *Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu*: published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras; pages 248, price Re. One.

This is one of those interesting volumes by publishing which Messrs. G. A. Natesan & Co. of Madras (whose example in this line has happily proved contagious) have been serving to intensify much of that national work which prominent national leaders have been doing for the uplift of India. The present volume is indeed a most acceptable one, for it presents to us in a well-sustained, delightful panorama of about 250 pages, the noble feelings and sentiments of a noble daughter of India who in her life, above all other things, was most advantageously taught, and who assiduously taught herself, *to feel nobly, to feel beautifully*. The sincerity and ardour of her expression would make these collected utterances a great source of strength to many of the workers in India's cause. We pray for long life to this patriot-daughter, this dear little song-bird, of mother India, frail in body but flaming forth all over the country with the inspiration of lofty sentiments.—so that other weighty volumes may be one day added to the present collection of what she has

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already spoken to kindle among her countrymen a burning spirit of service and love to their mother-land.

**3. The Presidential Address** of the Hon'ble Sir John Woodroffe at the first session of the All-India Cow Conference (Calcutta, Dec. 1917).

We very much wish this valuable address, which has been printed separately, as it has reached us, in pamphlet form, foolscap size, to gain as wide a publicity as possible in our country, so that all educated men and through them their less fortunate countrymen may be helped thereby to have a clear grasp of the great problem of the Cow in India. For this is one of the very root-problems in India, and in the degeneration of the Indian Cow may be read the sad tale of many Indian problems of degeneration. The cow, the symbol of self-diffusing wealth and the Brâhmaṇa, the symbol of self-diffusing Dharma (which is to guide one and all in the land) were once supposed to be the two pillars on which the destiny of India rested. The Brâhmaṇa forgot the spirit and purpose of Indian nationalism and Dharma declined to a moribund state. The suction of exploitation was driven deep into the soil made abnormally yielding by national disorganisation, and wealth comes to be to the slaving multitudes a by-gone dream and with it the cow a luxury that may but raise a silent

sigh of impossible hope. And yet all this despair must have to be turned into new determination to retrieve what is lost. And we shall highly congratulate the Cow Conference that sat in Calcutta last December, if it succeeds in at least helping to educate our people in the duties that we owe to-day to the cow in India. The further problem as to how these duties have to be approached by the Indian people, approached in what spirit and along what line of enthusiasm, will demand our consideration when once our attention has been drawn to the deplorable state of things. What we badly require in the very first place is education in the terrible realities of the situation and our duties expressed in any intelligible terms. The Presidential Address at the Cow Conference is a masterly presentation of these realities and these duties. And though the Conference expressly met on the basis of the economic aspect of the cow problem, the Presidential Address rivets and stimulates our interest because of the many illuminating references in it to broader problems of Indian regeneration, of the revival of the ancient Eastern attitude towards the cow, of the reawakening of the old sense of Swadharma in the people and so on. In a word, the whole address ought to occupy a permanent place in our literature both for its practical value and for its valuable background of right sentiment.

## THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY.

*(January to December 1917.)*

In December 1917 the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary has completed another year of its existence, and we have great pleasure in submitting a brief report of its activities during the year. On perusal it will be found that the returns of the outdoor dispensary are comparatively small this year. This partial relief of pressure on that department is due to a certain extent to the opening of a Government Dispensary at Lohaghat. This how-

ever will not take away from the popularity of the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary, which being conducted by Sadhus inspires a peculiar faith among the people as to the efficacy of treatment. The indoor department was tolerably busy this year with cases requiring careful treatment and nursing, and the Homœopathic section also has been growing into importance, and treated over 80 cases. The following statistics will give the details of work:—

## (a) Statement of Diseases Treated from January to December 1917.

Names of diseases	Outdoor	Indoor	Total
Specific Infections :—			
Small-pox ...	1		1
Syphilis ...	2		2
Malarial Fever ...	36	2	38
Nervous System :—			
Debility ...	3		3
Neuralgia ...	10		10
Respiratory System :—			
Coryza ...	7		7
Bronchitis ...	4		4
Pneumonia ...	0	1	1
Asthma ...	2		2
Digestive System :—			
Mouth and tooth	6		6
Dyspepsia ...	3		3
Diarrhoea ...	5	2	7
Dysentery ...	11		11
Peritonitis ...		1	1
Worms ...	17		17
Gastritis ...		1	1
Liver Complaints —	5		5
Ductless Glands and			
Lymphatic System :—			
Kidney ...	2	1	3
Anaemia with Dropsy	2	2	4
Goitre ...	7		7
Generative System :—			
Gonorrhœa ...	6		6
Leucorrhœa ...	3		3
Amenorrhœa ...	2		2
Dysmenorrhœa ...	2		2
Locomotive System :—			
Rheumatism ...	18	1	19
Gout ...	2		2
Diseases of the Skin	24		24
" " Eye	31	1	32
" " Ear	5		5
Surgical cases ...	23		23
Pyrexia of unknown origin ...	8		8
Other diseases ...	11		11
Total	258	12*	270

\* Of the 12 patients treated in the Indoor department 1 died from Pneumonia.

## (b) Statement of Religion and Sex of Patients:

Outdoor	Outdoor
Hindus ... 254	Men ... 145
Christian ... 4	Women ... 55
—	Children 58
258	258

Indoor	Indoor
Hindus ... 12	Men ... 8
	Women ... 2
	Children 2

## (c) Statement of receipts and disbursements from January to December 1917.

Receipts	Rs. As. P.
Last year's balance	... 240 13 9
Subscriptions and Donations for the year 1917, already acknowledged in the P. B. ...	... 526 0 3
Total Rs. ...	766 14 0
Disbursements	Rs. As. P.
Doctor's travelling expenses	... 40 0 0
" Maintenance & other necessaries	106 1 0
Medicines bought	... 54 8 0
Freight and Cooly hire etc. for Do....	14 7 0
Bedstead for indoor patients	... 13 15 9
Milk for patients	... 0 2 0
Total Rs. ...	289 1 9
Balance in hand Rs. ...	477 12 3

The Dispensary has all along depended on the generosity of the public for its maintenance and looks forward to a continuance of the same in future. The demands for service of sick indigent people in this backward region is very great and we earnestly appeal to all kind-hearted souls for funds to carry on our humble work of service for suffering Narayanas.

Contributions, however small, will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged by the undersigned.

SWAMI PROGNANANDA,

Secy., M. C. D.

Mayavati, Lohaghat P. O., Almora.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

As already announced, the 83rd birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna comes off on the 14th March next, and the public celebration thereof will take place at the Belur Math and its Branch Centres on the Sunday following, that is, on March 17, 1918. We request our kind readers to send us reports of the same for publication in the Prabuddha Bharata, as early as possible after the celebration is over.

THE thirteenth anniversary of the *Kalpataru Festival* of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on the 1st of January 1918 and the previous evening at Babu Harekrishna Bhuyan's Lodge, near the Cuttack Town Hall. The programme consisted of : Nagar Kirtan on the 31st December evening ; Prabhati Kirtan, Bhajana and Reading from the Scriptures in the morning of 1st January ; feeding the poor at noon, followed by a Lecture on "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Deva," Arati and Kirtan, with distribution of Prasada terminating the happy proceedings.

SWAMI Sarvananda of the Ramkrishna Mission, Madras, who was invited by the Ceylonese Bhaktas to visit certain parts of the country, delivered a lecture on "The cult of the Coming Man" at the Ridgeway Memorial Hall, Pettah, on Thursday, December 27, 1917, at 6-30 p. m. We hope to publish a fuller account of his activities in Ceylon in the coming issue of Prabuddha Bharata.

A public religious meeting of the Calcutta Vivekananda Society (78/1 Cornwallis Street) came off on Sunday, the 2nd February last, at 6 p. m. in the Hall of the Bengal Theosophical Society, when Pandit Kokileshwar Sastri Vidyaratna, Professor of Vedanta, Calcutta University, delivered his second lecture on "Is the Universe Unreal according to Advaitism." Pandit Kokileshwar is a well-known figure in Bengali literature and the Calcutta Vivekananda Society is to be congratulated upon its success in organising this series of lectures.

THE following is the report of the Rk. Mission Sevasrama, Brindaban, for the month of December, 1917 :—

There were 16 old indoor cases and 25 new admissions, of which 32 were discharged cured, 3 died and 6 were still under treatment at the end of the year. There were 2645 outdoor cases, of which 435 were new entries and 2210 their repetitions. Besides 5 persons were helped with medicines and doctor's visit free of charge in their own homes. The total receipts of the month including those for the building fund were Rs. 179-7-0 and the expenditure amounted to Rs. 183-14-0 and Rs. 242-11-3 from the general and building funds respectively.

FLOOD RELIEF WORK :—Owing to the collapsing of the Alwar bund, a part of Muttra District was seriously affected, which necessitated relief work. Two centres of relief were opened for the purpose — one at Radhakunda and the other at Barsana, and 1454 patients belonging to some 24 villages, surrounding the centres obtained relief ; 75 patients were being treated in their own homes and some were supplied with diet and clothing also. The relief work is still going on. Any contribution, however small, for this as well as for the general upkeep of the Sevasrama will be thankfully received by the Hon. Secretary, Rk. Mission Sevasrama, Bangshibat, Brindaban, Dt. Muttra.

THE ninth Annual General Meeting of the Ramkrishna Mission will be held at the Belur Math premises on the 7th April 1918, at 3-30 p. m. The agenda of business to be taken up at the meeting, subject to alterations, are as follows : 1. To consider the General Report of the Mission. 2. To sanction the amendment in the Bye-laws. 3. To elect auditors for the Mission. 4. To elect members proposed at the meeting. The presence of the members at the meeting is solicited.



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VOL. XXIII ]

MARCH 1918

[ No. 260

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Time : 18<sup>th</sup> Nov. A. D.

Subjects: *The realisation of the Self—Atman is inevitably attained through Karmayoga or work for the sake of others.—This point is argued by Swamiji at some length.*



After this, some pieces of Hindu music were rendered by Swamiji, but the disciple could not follow any way a single note of what was thus sung in an unfamiliar language, specially as he was perfectly innocent of the technique of music. So what could he do but keep his gaze fixed on the face of the singer? About this time, the devotees were all called to partake of refreshments as the first period of the long worship was over. After refreshment Swamiji came and took his seat in the parlour on the ground-floor, and all the many visitors settled down in circles round him. Accosting a householder friend who had his investiture with the

holy thread that day, Swamiji said, "Really you all belong to the twice-born castes, only it is long since you lost your status. From this day again, you become the twice-born. Repeat the *Gayatri* at least hundred times daily, do you see?" The householder expressed assent with, "Yes, Sir, I shall."

Meanwhile Srijut Mahendranath Gupta (Master-mahasaya) appeared on the scene, and Swamiji began to lavish on him many expressions of cordial reception. He was standing aloof in a corner after giving his greetings in silence, and the repeated requests of Swamiji made him take his seat in that corner with much confusion of modesty. "Master-mahasaya," said

Swamiji, "this is the anniversary of Thakur's birthday. So you shall have to relate to us something about Thakur." Master-mahasaya bent his head down smilingly in reply.

Just now it was announced that Swami Akhandananda was come from Murshidabad with a *pántuá*\* which weighed one maund and a half!! All of us hurried out to see this prodigious *pántuá*. When it was shown to Swamiji, he said, "Take it up to chapel for offering."

Making Swami Akhandananda the subject of his remarks, Swamiji said to the disciple, "Mark you, what a great hero he is in Karma (work)! Of fear, death and the like he has no cognizance, doggedly going on doing his own work,—'work for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many.'"

Disciple.— But, Sir, it must be a good deal of austerities out of which that power has come to him.

Swamiji.— True, power comes of austerities; but again, working for the sake of others itself constitutes Tapasyá (practice of austerity). The Karmayogins regard work itself as a part of Tapasyá. As on the one hand the practice of Tapasyá intensifies altruistic feelings in the devotee and actuate him to work, so also the pursuit of work for the sake of others carries the worker to the last fruition of Tapasyá, namely the purification of the heart, and leads him thus to the realisation of the supreme Atman.

Disciple.— But, Sir, how very few of us indeed can work whole-heartedly from the very outset for the sake of others! How difficult it is for such broad-minded-

\* A small light sweetmeat usually about two inches in length, made mostly of the milk-products fried in ghee and put in syrup of sugar.

ness to come at all as will make men sacrifice the desire for their own happiness and devote their lives for others!

Swamiji.— And how many have their minds going after Tapasyá? With the attraction for lust and lucre working the other way, how many long for the realisation of God? In fact, disinterested work is quite as much difficult as Tapasyá. So you have no right to say anything against those who go in for work in the cause of others. You find Tapasyá to be to your liking, well, go on with it, another finds work as congenial to himself, and you have no right to make a prohibition in his case. Ah, you have the settled idea in your mind, I see, that work is no Tapasyá at all!

Disciple.— That's it, Sir, I used to mean quite a different thing before this by Tapasyá.

Swamiji.— As by repeatedly following our religious practices, we find gradually a certain determined tendency of the mind engendered in us, so by performing disinterested work over and over again, even unwillingly, we gradually find the will merging itself in it. The inclination to work for others has thus to develop, do you see? Just do some such work once even though unwillingly and then see if the actual fruit of Tapasyá is realised within or not. As the outcome of work for the sake of others the many angularities of the mind get smoothed down and men are gradually lifted to a sincere preparedness for perfect self-sacrifice for the good of others.

Disciple.— But, how comes, Sir, the necessity at all for doing good to others?

Swamiji.— Well, it is necessary for my own good. We become forgetful of the ego when we think of the body as dedicated to the service of others,—the body

with which most complacently you identify the ego. And in the long run comes the consciousness of bodilessness. The more intently you come to think of the well-being of others, the more oblivious of self you become. In this way as gradually your heart gets purified by work, you will come to feel your own Self as pervading all beings and all things. Thus it is that the doing good to others constitutes a way, a means of revealing one's own Self or Atman. So know this to be one of the spiritual practices, a discipline for God-realisation. Its aim also is Self-realisation. Exactly as that aim is attained by Jnana (knowledge), Bhakti (devotion) and so on, so also by work for the sake of others.

Disciple.— But then if I am to keep thinking of others day and night, when shall I contemplate on the Atman, Sir? If I rest wholly occupied with something determinate and relative, how can I realise 'That which is indeterminate and Absolute?

Swamiji.— The highest aim of all disciplines, all spiritual paths, is the attainment of the knowledge of Atman. If you, by being devoted to the service of others and by getting your heart purified by such work, attain to the vision of all beings as the Self, what else remains unattained in the way of Self-realisation? Would you say that Self-realisation is the state of existing as inert matter, as this wall or as this piece of wood, for instance?

Disciple.— No; though that is not the meaning, yet what the Shastra (scripture) speaks of as the withdrawal of the Self into its real nature consists in the arresting of all mind-functions and all work.

Swamiji.— Yes, this Samadhi of which the Shastra speaks is a state not at all easy to attain. When very rarely it appears in somebody, it does not last for long, so what will he keep himself occupied

with? Thus it is that after realising that state described in the Shastra, the saint sees the Self in all beings and in that consciousness devotes himself to service, so that any Karma that was yet left working itself out through the body may thus exhaust itself. It is this particular state which has been described by the makers of Shastra as Jivan-mukti, "Freedom while living."

Disciple.— So after all it comes about, Sir, that unless this state of Jivan-mukti is attained, work for the sake of others can never be pursued in the truest sense of the term.

Swamiji.— Yes, that is what the Shastra has said; and yet again it says that work or service for the good of others leads up to this state of Jivan-mukti. Otherwise, there would have been no need on the part of the Shastra to teach us a particular path of religious practice called the Karma-yoga over and above the other three paths.

The disciple now understood the point and resumed silence, and Swamiji giving up the topic, commenced rendering in a voice of superhuman sweetness the following song, composed by Babu Girish Ch. Ghose to commemorate Sri Raimakrishna's Nativity:—

"Who art Thou lying on the lap of the poor Brahmin matron, throwing out a resplendence all around, oh, say, who art Thou come unclad, naked, into the lowly hut?

"Jewel incomparable on earth, oh, who art Thou come here to throw all men into a spell of joy? Or, art Thou come out of swelling compassion at seeing the world in dire distress?

"To reveal Thyself to the aggrieved in heart art Thou come in secret? The whole face aglow with compassion, for whose sake, say, Thou criest and smilest?

"Oh, the beauty of thy form, soul-ravishing, seeing which one can hardly turn one's eyes away from it. Thou who relieveth the afflictions of the heart, I long to take Thee into my arms."

In the singing of this song, Swamiji was joined by Girish Babu and other devotees. The line in the song suggesting the advent of the Lord out of compassion for the world in distress was repeated several times. After this, other well-known songs were sung with great enthusiasm. And

then in accordance with the rituals by which the Nativity was solemnised, a live fish was released in the Ganges waters with much pomp and drum-beating. Lastly zeal and joy ran high when all the visitors sat to a sumptuous banquet spread out of the holy offerings to the Lord.

### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

**S**HOW me thy foot, genius,' cried the great romantic seer of France, towards the early seventies of the nineteenth century, 'and let us see if, like myself, thou hast the dust of earth upon thy heel. If thou hast never walked in the dusty footpath which I tread, thou knowest not me, nor I thee, depart! Thou who believest thyself an angel art but a bird.' And how little could the soul of Victor Hugo discern at that time that the star of the new angel had already swum into our 'ken,' that type of creation which can not only soar beyond the common horizon but can also descend on earth to fulfil the mighty purpose of national and international destiny, can determine the fate of the world for even better and larger ends than heretofore achieved. For such elements run together constituted the gigantic make-up of the personality of Swami Vivekananda, the acclaimed patriot-saint of modern India and not the lesser, therefore, in the eyes of all the world beside: The man whose victorious march on its bosom was as a great hurricane-blast that wrenched off the deep-rooted trees of distrust and disbelief, and helped to consign the accumulated weeds of ages of mutual ill-feeling and jealousy between religions, nations, classes and sects to one great holocaust of fire. And

all these for what? The saint who came into being and finished his earthly career before this crucial test of the modern civilisation in a world-wide war came on was not a mere idle visionary. His was the message of an "angel" for humanity and we who have recently observed his birth-festival synchronous with the birth of the springtide on the face of the earth, could do nothing better than lay to our heart the message that he gave to his own nation and incidentally to other nations as well.

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The first thing to understand about him is the significant fact that everything that could make him one with his period and his country was his. In the light of the past he read the present and then pointed the way to the future. The staple of his inspiration lay in that help which is accorded to the weak by the strong, the worldly and the ease-loving by the spiritual, the ignorant by the knowing. He did not seek to make his virtues secluded and cloistered ones. He grappled with the problems of India at the present moment and ended by solving the problem for the whole world. It was no mere intellectual solution that he gave. With him, as with his great Guru, Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahansa, it was Deep calling

unto deep, Thought burning to possess thought, the Soul aquiver with the throb unseen, and Life passionately seizing and ennobling life. At the same time he never thought it a taint on his own soul to establish loving commerce with the concerns of the world, in all their broadest and deepest moments. But the intellectual mediocre was and is even now often stupefied in co-ordinating and understanding in their right relations which was uppermost in him, the soldier or the saint, the essence of both of which had gone to form the warp and woof of the precious web of his personality. It will sometimes seem that he danced his heroic measure on the level of a national idea alone, but that would be merely anticipating by half the fulness of his vision beatific, for he did catch the full glare of the ethereal summits "where all is one and bliss" above. Who is he? Which is he? Tender, he uplifts the down-trodden and hugs in his bosom the socially molested, the humanly weak like Jesus of Nazareth now and then utters forth his epopee of a new social order perhaps, with all the ardour of an Encyclopedist and yet again, wrought to superhuman energy he laughs at the weakness of people as the 'Avidya' of the ages and creates what to some is "a divine satire" on the state of humanity. Like Moses he would cause the water to gush forth from the rock and like Christ he would whip out the hucksters and traders from the temple of God. He knew his moments of love and hatred—this "angel-soul" on earth.

He was capable of both love and hatred as all great souls have been in the past as also in the present and with this great difference that hatred for him had no sting and he completely realised what is meant by hatred as but the inverted form of love,

of love human and divine. A born Sannyasin, he was the apostle of a new civic and national organisation. Yes, and only because his was the Life and vision, which the modern civilised consciousness wants more than anything else. He knew the part that hatred had played and is now playing in the political fashionings and refashionings of the different states of Europe. He knew all the dire consequences thereof. But life and love, like all other cherished things must bide by their good time and come not when men sigh snugly seated in their arm-chairs but go out on the quest in sackcloth and ashes.

It was the politics of the States, the groupings of nations which took place on the expiry of the Middle Ages and the inauguration of the modern era though the influence of the Renaissance and the Reformation movement, and the long and bloody wars that came in its train that came to mean a step which however productive of national solidarity and freedom of faith in Europe, was but the precursor of all international disunion and discord in thousand ghastly forms. The national solidarity came to base itself on the hatred of another nation, on the doubtful masonry work of political power and political exploitation of others in its scheme of self-aggrandisement. So that was how the real ends of human existence were forgot which India nourished all the while, though not always in an organised form, to her immense political discomfiture. And then with the process of years came to be added the other features of extreme commercialisation and industrialisation of nations which changed the whole colour of Europe and made her a prey to the python of that green monster, jealousy. And all this time only the recording angel in the

heart of Europe went silently writing out. The voice of the centuries still ringing in its ears Europe made desperate efforts to find new and newer forms of political redistribution of rights and privileges as the sole anchor-ground of its hope. But was not the water poisoned at the very fountainhead, of which all its people had taken their fill before starting on their voyage?

And so the best intellects of Europe began systematically to employ all their resources in the production of theories and schools founded on them, which only countenanced strife-theory and along with it began the intellectual "storm and stress," that most dangerous wavering between the worlds of spirit and matter, that wrestling on the heights which, because of the weightiness of the issues involved, drew wonder and rapt attention only for a time but which at length culminated in turning the whole of Europe into one dreary soulless outlook of a mere mechanical and industrial stage-board reared on the bayonets of contending armaments. The rival neighbours all stiletto and mask playing at the game of political hide and seek in the utter dereliction of all spiritual hopes and aspirations. Still what a hope! It is this state again which they in their self-delusion labelled as one of true optimism and tried to sell that at a premium in all the markets of the East as well, sure in their belief that theirs was the kingdom of heaven and the plenty thereof. The time has come, however, when it understands that it is but the repetition in a larger scale of that historical mistake which Greece committed centuries before. And Europe with all her glib talk of growth and development is still but a province of Hellenistic culture. Greece and Rome have impressed their

long-enduring stamp upon its culture, entire. The Greek worshipped the state not merely as a symbol of external authority but also as a giver of his personal freedom. He incorporated his individuality with his city-state, of which he was a member. His immediate purview, his immediate environment, his social order, his fineness of artistic perception, his dreams of Gods, whose prime attributes were their beauty and grandeur,—all these were his very characteristic, which with certain modifications he has fully succeeded in handing down to his successors—the modern European nations.

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To the Greek his spiritual nature unfolded in strict unity with that of the body and it is this latter phase of him which was reserved for a future philosopher on state and metaphysics to adopt, interpret and then disgustingly to discard. Hegel's was at first typically Greek and as such a European mind but he failed, even though he failed gloriously for he could divine the truth intellectually at least, which others could not. Here we speak guardedly lest we should happen to speak of the religious culture of the Middle Ages because to some writers that period of European history, at least in that particular part of it which attended to the highest religious consciousness, is but a mere blank, an accident in the annals of the full-blooded Europe of the modern era, full of the horrid Romish tyranny of the church and the Popes. So we come to speak of the failure of Hegel. Ever since political philosophy approximated to the condition of being systematised as a science in the West, it has been the invariable custom to discuss of the 'ends' of the state and Hegel's contribution to it was essentially of the moral type, in fit keeping with the

high idealistic strain of his philosophy. His interpretation of history and society was the outcome of this standpoint, when he said that "thought is eternal, and it is the consciousness of this thought which is gradually believed through the long succession of ages, races and humanity and it advances in possession of itself with the slow and gradual movement of creation." This was, again, that 'dialectical' development which he sought to exemplify in the Hellenistic mind, from a psycho-genetic study of the same. It was exactly here that he met with an utter break-down of his hopes—as such the most significant of all such failures because in Hegel Europe had found the one strong man who could wield this bow of Ulysses for its salvation by the wedding together of high metaphysics and politics, out of the heart of its materialistic centre. Hegel marked the inability of the Greek mind to cope with the realities of life, even the antinomian horrors thereof, because it was so narrow, so circumscribed that it could hardly venture to step out into what it called "the darkness beyond" of the other world. But was it really so? In fact the Greek mind was not really spiritual—it was the mere joy in the life phenomenal, life artistic to a degree. It merely thrived on ostrich optimism, it was hard for it to interrelate itself with any kind of organisation beyond that of the city-state kind. Rome had it to be sure but then it was all "hard prose" for the Roman, with his borrowed Greek culture with an imperialistic stamp put upon it. The truth then flashed into the mind of Hegel. He saw that a possession ceases to be spiritual by the very fact that it is not spiritually achieved, and so, with all respect for his category of ideal unity through reason, he could but now turn his face away from that aspect of reality and

optimism in life which the Greek mind disclosed.

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And so it stands there—the eternal sphinx-problem of humanity, stern and grim in its urge for a speedy solution. Hegel with his limited vision of Graeco-Roman-Hebraic conception failed to account for that spiritual culture, at once individual and social, which India alone did nourish through long long ages and solved the problem for state-politics and soul polities together. And so what he was content to leave to the intellect as a dialectical movement of the Absolute through history, a mere dovetailed conception of unity and plurality, which crippled his metaphysics of all latency to combine into an organic unity with the facts of the world, a lame Absolute, which the political theorists of a later date could do nothing but reject and sneer upon. The problem however received its answer, Oedipus-like, strikingly simple in the naivete and statement thereof but sharp as the blade of a razor to walk upon in practice. It is "Renunciation and love" and the sages of India had solved it long long ago. It was the voice of these ancient sages that once more grew terribly audible this time to the ears of the materialistic West in the hall of the Parliament of Religion in Chicago in the year 1893.

To-day we are asked to confront a new Europe. Once again, out of its reeking battle-fields has gone forth the cry for liberty and freedom in the highest sense—the renewed seeking for the north-west passage of light and life. It is not merely the hope of romantic seers and imaginative thinkers like the Goethes and Hugos of Europe but it is now the collective sentiment of a Europe plunged in the blood-

bath of millions of its sons. Mr. W. L. Courtenay, of the *Fortnightly Review* made this point plain in his book called the "Armageddon and After." A Mr. Henry Asquith defining the nature of public right, a Viscount Haldane or a Woodrow Wilson to-day only corroborates the so-called "utopian" thinkers and "hopeless idealists" of the world. Statesmen, financiers, chancellors and Parliamentary members, and the trustees of nation in every other sphere of thought and action are now gradually turning to it. The question of nationality is still a very important one. It is still organically bound up with the very being of man, but does it therefore preclude us from turning to love as the cementing basis instead of making hatred to serve the same purpose, masquerading so long in all the high-sounding names of political expediency, state integrity and so forth? The great point to remember every-time we fall into the mistake of divorcing polities from religion should be that life is one, not many, that the individual is but the state in a microcosm, and even greater than that. Protection in the individual means quite a world to the world of differences and prejudices—if only we have the eyes to see and the hearts to perceive. It is there that the hope of Indian nationalism lies buried and there also the internationalism of the future. Not a theory but Fact. Fact, grim and bare till we shine, "full alchemised and free of space."

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They misunderstand Swami Vivekananda, when they try to make out of him a Kosciusko or a Karl Marx, a Mazzini or a Nietzsche. He was one and all of them and yet he was just himself and no other, just as he appeared to his contemporaries the 'angel' and the man, par excellence, the

two soul-fronts in one human shape combined to ride on the whirlwind of convulsions and scatter the seeds of worldwide amity and good-will. The supremest of idealists—was it ever insinuated of him that he should try to hide the inner light of him under a bushel and sell his divine and spiritual birthright for a mess of pottage, the hatred of Chauvinism, the one only stock-in-trade of the Western political theorists and nation-builders. For the nationalism which draws its inspiration from the gymnasts of the academy and the palestra merely does and will undoubtedly find itself sandwiched between the Scylla of hatred for an alien people and alien rights and the Charybd's of class-strifes and class-prejudices within its own exclusive circle. The theory that the strength of a nation should be buttressed up on its hate of another has to hide its now diminishing head for ever, so that the new idea of national solidarity and national righteousness may emerge to shame the soul of the canting hypocrites, the pseudo-patriots, who have so long fed octopus-like on the heart's blood of each and every nation alike.

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India has more than any other country that tremendous spiritual power which makes of all political accretions of strength but mere specks of froth on a vast mass of surging sea. Greece has failed to conquer Europe and the world along with it; and so has Rome with all her splendour of imperialistic pomp. It is the turn of India now and India with her spirituality is henceforth going to be a symbol for the wide-awake post-war civilisation of the world. Vivekananda was born emphatically for this, if for no other reason.

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And this once more is the hope of India. It is no mere stop-gap optimism of the

West, borrowed from Hellenistic sources, but the optimism which rich in its spiritual contents can take this also for a passing show. How many of us are there who have the grit so to deny the world and the flesh as Vivekananda did? And yet we have to rise to his consciousness, for that is the legacy he has left for us, to bring that within, which is strength and love and order without. The era of transvaluation of all values in the homes, the courts, the councils, the cabinet-chambers, every nook and crevice of human society has come—and all to be accomplished in the light of

that true vision of the one which India witnessed to and made into a power for good everywhere. Think of it, dream of it! We are not to lay down our arms where we are for that mighty prophecy is now going to be fulfilled in its actual sense—"Behold, ye shall not sleep and ye shall all be changed." Death will then lose all its sting and life its horrors when once we have pledged ourselves to that point of view and answered that eternally ringing voice of challenge—"Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."



### "THE ECSTASY."

(*Chapitre VIII., Visions de L'Inde, par Jules Bois.—"L'Ecstase."*)

[ TRANSLATED BY BABU GURUDAS SARCAR, M. A. ]

We have fled past the town. The docks with their length of 12 English miles have come to an end. The waters of the Ganges are rising around us and a favourable tide is carrying us towards the monastery, all white—in its palmgrove—over which rises the trident of the Pagoda—the monastery beckons to us from its complaisant terraces.

The American lady has become grave. She remembers having heard at New York this Vivekananda who charms the Souls. She agreed at once when I asked her to accompany me. She is an indefatigable traveller. I was presented to her at Paris during the Exposition (Exhibition). We met since at Cairo and again in Calcutta, yesterday, before the Great Eastern Hotel. I recognised her by her steely glance and her profile—chaste and insatiate. "How small is the world," she cried. "The earth is only a crossway where wanderers cross each other." Vivekananda is standing on

the terrace. His big eyes seemed to have eaten up his visage.

This man—with almost a swarthy complexion—and dressed as the Aryans of six thousand years ago—born so far from my corner of the earth—speaking another tongue and adoring another God—has been my best friend. He lived at Paris for several weeks in my residence. Together we travelled to Constantinople, Greece and Egypt. He incarnated for me—with his genius and his perilous frenzy—that India which I cherish as the Fatherland of my dreams—the Eden where lives the Ideal.

We discussed together all the questions relating to destiny and the hereafter. Like the great Tolstoy—who is about to die—this Hindu has got the speciality that he conforms his life to his thoughts—living the life of a vagrant and renouncing all that makes the joy and pride of other men—love, family, and even the glory of writing and of being an artist. A monk!

His life-story, as Emerson would say,—is a representative one. As a child he met a sage—a “Paramhansa,” a “Mahatma,” a great soul. It was a Brahmin ignorant in Science and Learning but formidable in Asceticism whom his disciples call Ramkrishno—a name combined of those of the two great heroes of Ind, of whom he is supposed to have been a reincarnation. Ramkrishno did not know Sanskrit which is still the sacred language. He never wrote—he never travelled abroad—his delicate life rolled on in its short enough course—in the gardens of another temple of Kali lying to the north of Calcutta. He spoke to his people when the ecstasy could no longer hold him in its abysmal depth.

The boy who had become his chosen disciple drank in with his ears all the instructions of the master and as his heart of a patriot bled at all the miseries and despairs of his country he dreamed of regenerating it after the sublime counsel of this recluse. The latter called him Vivekananda or “Happy conscience” and ordained him to travel all over the world in order to bring back the experience necessary to reformers. Then he died. The young disciple believed in the departed soul. He became a Sanyasi, threw aside even his garments and besmeared with ashes—he went all over India on foot—eating sometimes in the palaces of Rajas—and sometimes in the huts of the humble peasants—sleeping sometimes under trees or in the verandahs—lamenting the loss of his master and vowing to render immortal and efficacious the gospel which he had received from him.

It was a sort of Universal Religion—without precise cult—with equal respect for all the gods and their messengers. When he believed himself fortified by that wandering life of a divine mendicant, he

departed for America where he obtained by his lectures a fabulous success. But he finished by losing there his fragile health of a Bengalee—liable hereditarily to diabetes and the disease of the liver. No matter, he brought a sum sufficient for erecting his monastery and receiving there the members of the Brotherhood, the disciples of the same master.

These are the first words at the threshold of his house—“I am free, my friend—I am liberated anew. I have given all. The money weighed me down like chains. I am now the poorest man in the poorest country in the world. But the House of Ramkrishno has been built and his spiritual family has received a shelter.”

He saw the American and saluted her with a gentle gesture which has become in the West the attitude of prayer—the hands joined—the heads inclined. It is thus in the images—the spouses of the Hindu gods are represented before the celestial masters.

Then he presented us to his people saying—“Behold my brothers and my children,” under their splendid turbans—the young men smiled at us—with still ingenuous eyes of the apprentices of life. The old people snatched themselves off from their meditation of the Vedas—their bent foreheads marked with the Shivaic symbol. Sudras—Brahmans—and Parrias also were united here, as, for the Prophet the caste is abolished. God is equally present in all. He took a *narghile* (Hooka pipe) which a disciple was smoking and drew from it a puff which perfumed the air round as with an odour of the rose. Then he gave us some lotus flowers.—“Come upon the terraces” said he, “my friends are about to prepare the tiffin.” (In Anglo-India they call thus, the repast of the middle of the day.) From there we

saw the most moving spectacle. It was India—her fields fresh under the burning sun—the ponds like some mirrors which a goddess might have let fall in her flight—the forests (from afar) soft like velvet fleece—and the Ganges like a virile arm which folds the earth—in love.

On the other side of the stream a pagoda reared its spire. Near it a great banian tree spread its enormous boughs which striking the descending roots into the soil had transformed themselves into separate trees.

—Under its shade my master Ramkrishno entered for the first time into "Samadhi," that is to say—into an ecstasy in which he was merged into the God-head. For us the spot is as sacred as the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya, near which Gantam became conscious of his mission.

Half an hour afterwards—in his cell Vivekanando himself served us the "tiffin" which consisted of eggs, fresh milk, aromatic grains and mangoes—fruits which were to us more exquisite than peaches. But he himself could not sit with us. He begged to be excused for not giving us meat. The monastery made no use of it.

Strange apartment this of the Swami where the nude simplicity of a Hindu anchorite was mixed up with the practical furniture of a Western philosopher—rocking chair, a library of varied works where Emerson and Spencer elbowed the indigenous publications gathered in rolls.

A disciple offered us some betels in a green leaf. They all came from the monastery garden where they had been gathered. I chewed. A taste of nicotine and flower filled my mouth—my teeth became red.

"Narcotics are smoked or chewed all over India" said the Sanyasi with a smile. "For us, life is a dream and what you call dream among yourselves is for us the sole reality. All that are for you true,

veritable and real—because of their visible or tangible attribute are, for us a sport of Maya—a mere Illusion—that which changes and passes away is not worth the trouble of being loved—nor even of being looked at. The cities, the luxury, and the glories, the civilisations and the prodigies of material science—we have known them all for centuries and we are disgusted with the usage. Childish sports devised for children.

"We are awakened from the brutalising dream of which you are still under the influence. We shut the eyes, retain our breath and sit under the soft shadow of the trees in front of the primitive fire. The infinite then opens to us the marvellous doors and we enter into the inner world which is the only truth. There—see for yourself. There are few Europeans who have penetrated these mysteries."

We leaned towards the window of the cell. A clock struck. In the garden under an Indian fig tree the monks were seated in a circle. They balanced the head and the back in a rhythmic movement. He who had just accompanied us sang in a strange voice—recalling our plain-chant but more strident and more joyous. In the centre a fire burnt away into grey cinders. At the side of the fire the trident of Shiva was planted dressed in garlands, all fixed their eyes upon the flame where dwelt the divinity. A great peace soared up from the organisms hypnotised by the igneous soul—a peace frightful to us whom activity turns tipsy—a peace from which rose up the chant as on a sonorous wing—and the golden bees danced over the ecstatic heads in streaks of sunlight, while from inside the sacred stables the cows raised their venerable heads associating themselves with the strange cult in which man reenters into universal nature and is annihilated without death.

## EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA,

( *Translated from Bengali.* )

## CXXXII.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

1894.

Dear and beloved,

Your letter gives me all the news over there. I am grieved to hear of the bereavement — has sustained. Such is the Lord's will. This is a place for action, not enjoyment, and everyone will go home when his task is done, —some earlier, and some later, that is all. F— has gone—well, such is the will of the Lord! • It is a welcome news that Sri Ramakrishna's Festival has come off with great *eclat*; the more his name is spread, the better it is. But there is one thing to know—great sages come with special messages for the world, and not for name, but their followers throw their teachings overboard and fight over their names—this is verily the history of the world. I do not take into any consideration whether people accept his name or not, but am ready to lay down my life to help his teachings, his life and his message spread all over the world. What I am most afraid of is the worship-room. It is not bad in itself, but there is a tendency in some to make this all in all and set up that old-fashioned nonsense over again,—this is what makes me nervous. I know why they busy themselves with those old, effete ceremonials. Their spirit craves for work, but having got no outlet they waste their energy in ringing bells and all that.

I am giving you a new idea. If you can work it out then I shall know you are men, and will be of service.....Make an organised plan. A few cameras, some maps, globes, and some chemicals etc. are needed. The

next thing you want is a big hut. Then you must get together a number of poor, indigent folk. Having done all these, show them pictures from Astronomy, Geography etc. and preach Sri Ramakrishna to them. Try to have their eyes opened as to what has taken place or is taking place in different countries, what this world is like, and so forth. You have got lots of poor and ignorant folk there. Go to their cottages, from door to door, in the evening, at noon, any time,—and open their eyes. Books etc. won't do—give them oral teaching. Then slowly extend your centres. Can you do all this? Or, only bell-ringing?

I have heard everything about — from Madras. They are highly pleased with him. Dear —, if you go to Madras and live there for some time, it will do a lot of work. But before you go, start this work there first. Can't the lady devotees convert some widows into disciples? And can't you put a bit of learning into their heads? And can't you then send them out to preach Sri Ramakrishna from door to door, and impart education along with it? \* \*

Come! Apply yourselves heart and soul to it. The day of gossip and ceremonials is gone, my boy, *you must work now*. Now, let me see how far a Bengalee's religion will go. L— wants some warm clothing. The people here import winter clothing from Europe and India. You will get a piece of cloth in Calcutta at one fourth of the price at which I shall buy it here.....I don't know when I shall go to Europe, everything is uncertain with me—I am getting on somehow in this country, that is all.

This is a very funny country. It is now summer—this morning it was as hot as April

in Bengal, but now it is as cold as February at Allahabad! So much fluctuation within four hours! The hotels of this country beggar description. For instance, there is an hotel in New York where a room can be hired for up to Rs. 5000 a day, excluding boarding charges. Not even in Europe is there a country like this in point of luxury. It is indeed the richest country in the world, where money is drained off like water. I seldom live in hotels, but am mostly the guest of big people here. To them I am a widely known man. The whole country knows me now, so wherever I go they receive me with open arms into their homes. Mr. H.—'s home is my centre in Chicago.—I call his wife mother, and his daughters call me brother. I scarcely find a family so highly pure and kind. Or why should God shower His blessings on them in such abundance, my brother? Oh, how wonderfully kind they are! If they chance to learn that a poor man is in a strait at such and such a place, there, they will go, ladies and gentlemen, to give him food and clothing, and find him some job! And what do we do!

In summer they leave their homes to go to foreign lands, or to the sea-side. I, too, shall go somewhere, but have not yet fixed a place. In other points, they are just as you see with Englishmen. They have got books and things of that sort, but very dear. You can have five times those things in Calcutta for the same price. In other words, these people will not let foreign goods be imported into the country. They set a heavy tax on them, and as a result, the market goes up enormously. Besides, they are not much in the way of manufacturing clothings etc. They construct tools and machinery, and grow wheat, rice, cotton etc.—which are fairly cheap.

By the bye, now-a-days we have plenty of hilsa fish here. Eat your fill, but everything digests. There are many kinds of fruits; plantain, lemon, guava, apple, almond, raisin, and grape are in abundance; besides many

other fruits come from California. There are plenty of pineapples, but there are no mangoes or lichis, or things of that sort.

There is a kind of spinach, which when cooked, tastes just like our *netti* of Bengal, and another class, which they call asparagus, tastes exactly like the tender *dengo* herb, but you can't have our *charchari* made of it here. There is no *kalihi* or any other pulse, they do not even know of them. There is rice, and loaf, and numerous varieties of fish and meat, of all descriptions. Their menu is like that of the French. There is your milk, rarely curd, but plenty of whey. Cream is an article of everyday use. In tea, and coffee, and everything there is that cream,—not the hardened crust of boiled milk, mind you—and there is your butter, too, and ice-water,—no matter whether it is summer or winter, day or night, whether you have got a bad cold or fever,—you have ice-water in abundance. These are scientific people and laugh when they are told that ice-water aggravates cold. The more you take, the better, And there is plenty of ice-cream, of all sorts of shapes. I have seen the Niagara Falls seven or eight times, the Lord be praised! Very grand no doubt, but not quite as you have heard them spoken of. One day, in winter, we had the aurora borealis. \* \* Only childish prattle! I have not much time to listen to that sort of thing in this life; it will be time enough to see if I can do that in the next.

— has completely rallied by this time, I hope? The vagabond spirit of — is not yet at an end, I see. What is wanted is a power of organisation—do you understand me? Have any of you got that much brain in your head? If you do, let your mind work. — will be able to do it. — has got very little originality, but is a very good workman, and persevering—which is an essential necessity, and is executive to a degree. \* \* We want some disciples—fiery young men,—do you see?—intelligent and brave, who dare to go to the jaws of Death, and are

ready to swim the ocean across. Do you follow me? We want hundreds like that, both men and women. Try your utmost for that end alone. Make converts right and left, and put them into our purity-drilling machine.

\* \* \* What made you communicate to the "Indian Mirror" that Paramahamsa Deva used to call Narendra such and such, and all sorts of nonsense?—As if he had nothing else to do but that! Only thought-reading and nonsensical mystery-mongering! \* \* \* It is excellent that — is visiting you often. Do you write letters to G—? Convey to him my love, and take kind care of him. Everything will come right by degrees. I don't find much time to write heaps of letters. As for lectures and so forth, I don't prepare them beforehand. Only one I wrote out, which you have printed. The rest I deliver off-hand, whatever comes to my lips,—Gurudeva backs me on. I have nothing to do with pen and paper. Once at Detroit I held forth for three hours at a stretch. Sometimes I myself wonder at my own achievement—to think that there was such stuff in this pate! They ask me here to write a book, well, I think I must do something that way, this time. But that's the botheration; who will take the trouble of putting things in black and white and all that ! \* \*

We must electrify society, electrify the world. Idle gossips and barren ceremonials won't do. Ceremonials are meant for householders, your work is the distribution and propagation of thought-currents. If you can do that, then it is all right. \* \*

Let character be formed, and then I shall be in your midst. Do you see? We want two thousand Sannyasins, nay ten, or even twenty thousand—men and women, both. What are our matrons doing? We want converts at any risk. Go and tell them, and try yourselves, heart and soul. Not householder-disciples, mind you, we want Sannyasins. Let each one of you have a hundred heads tousured—young educated men, not

fools. Then you are heroes. We must make a sensation. Give up your passive attitude, gird your loins and stand up. Let me see you make some electric circuits between Calcutta and Madras. Start centres at places, go on always making converts. Convert everyone into the monastic order, whoever seeks for it, irrespective of sex, and then I shall be in your midst. A huge spiritual tidal wave is coming—he who is low shall become noble and he who is ignorant shall become the teacher of great scholars—through his grace. "उत्तिष्ठ जायत प्राप्य वरानिबोधत"—"Awake! Arise! and stop not till the goal is reached." Life is ever expanding, contraction is death. The self-seeking man who is looking after his personal comforts and leading a lazy life,—there is no room for him even in hell. He alone is a child of Sri Ramakrishna who is moved to pity for all creatures and exerts for them even at the risk of incurring personal damnation—इतरे कृष्णः—"others are vulgar people." Whoever, at this great spiritual juncture, will stand up with a courageous heart, and go on spreading from door to door, from village to village, his message, is alone my brother, and a son of his. This is the test, he who is Ramakrishna's child, does not seek his personal good.—"प्राणात्मेऽपि परकल्प्याण्मिकीर्षतः"—They wish to do good to others even when at the point of death. Those that care for their personal comforts and seek a lazy life, who are ready to sacrifice all before their personal whims, are none of us; let them pack off, yet while there is time. Propagate his character, his teachings, his religion. This is the only spiritual practice, the only worship, this verily is the means, and this the goal. Arise! Arise! A tidal wave is coming! Onward! Men and women, down to the Chandala—all are pure in his eyes. Onward! Onward! There is no time to care for name, or fame, or Mukti, or Bhakti! We shall look to these some other time. Now in this life let us infinitely spread his lofty character, his sublime life, his infinite soul. This is the

only work—there is nothing else to do. Wherever his name will reach, the veriest worm will attain divinity, nay, is actually attaining it, you have got eyes and don't you see it? Is it a child's play? Is it silly prattle? Is it foolery? "उत्तिष्ठत जाप्त" —"Arise! Awake!" Great Lord! He is at our back. I cannot write any more.—Onward! I only tell you this that whoever reads this letter, will imbibe my spirit! Have faith! Onward! Great Lord! \* \* \* I feel as if somebody is moving my hand to write in this way. Onward! Great Lord! Everyone will be swept away! Take care, he is coming! Whoever will be ready to serve him,—no, not him, but his children,—the poor and the down-trodden, the sinful and the afflicted, down to the very worm—who will be ready to serve

these, in them he will manifest himself. Through their tongue the Goddess of Learning Herself will speak, and the Divine Mother—the Embodiment of all Power—will enthrone Herself in their hearts. Those that are atheists, unbelievers, worthless and foppish, why do they call themselves as belonging to his fold? \* \*

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda.

P. S. \* \* \* The term Organisation means division of labour. Each does his own part and all the parts taken together express an ideal of harmony. Here are a few lines of poetry for your perusal—

"A song I sing to thee," &c.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MISSION TO THE WEST.

(BY BRAHMACHARI GURUDAS.)

**T**HE Parliament of Religions at Chicago, in 1893 was convened with a very definite object. That object presumably was, to bring before the world a clear conception of what men of different climes, of different nations, of different beliefs, held to be the highest aim in life; to make known to all the world what man thought about himself, about nature and about God,—in short, to learn the ideals of the religious belief held by people from the different corners of the earth. And then to compare notes and to settle once for all the nettling question, which of the many religions professed by man, should stand supreme, which belief would be entitled to proclaim itself paramount and best fitted as a universal religion.

A lofty idea, no doubt. But there was no question in the Western mind as to the outcome of the contest. And there were strange rumours abroad. The West, always confident,

always cock-sure of herself, convinced beyond the idea of a doubt that she leads the world in every field of accomplishment, that her civilisation, her culture, her customs, her ideals are the standard after which Eastern races should model themselves, the West, considering her conquest of Eastern nations as a boon to these, what she calls, less enlightened peoples,—felt satisfied that in the year 1893, at Chicago a conquest would be made which would silence, once for all, the feeble voice of all coloured races; that she would make the greatest of all her conquests, the conquest of religion. And that from that day on, she would be able to silence with authority, all claims of religion, uttered by protesting voices. Christianity, so hopelessly unsuccessful in the East before, would after that memorable day unfurl her banner in every land upon which the sun smiles. The East would be convinced of the folly of further

protest against, of further indifference towards the religion of the West. The doors would be opened for the missionaries and the East would be Christianized.

The one point on which the East had not yet submitted was her religion. It was the one rock on which the Western sword had broken, unable to withstand the force of contact. All this would soon be changed. Submissive, on bent knees, the head bowed low, the East would sit at the feet of the West, to learn of her the message of peace and salvation. The Parliament of Religions was to bring the heathen to his senses.

But the gods smiled. And the Rishis in celestial spheres rejoiced. For they knew that at last the day had come when their age-long austerities, their Tapasya, their renunciation, their prayers, their meditations, their life-long Brahmacharya, would bear fruition. And through the voice of one of their chosen children, the entire wealth of their realisations would flood, not only the land which they had graced and blessed with their presence, but even the entire world. For East and West alike would hear the glad tiding of deliverance.

And the East would listen and the West would listen and the glorious message of brotherly love and compassion would encircle the earth. For once more the command had sounded—and this time in the ears of a modern saint in India—"Go ye out into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

And so the day drew nearer. The Chicago exhibition was opened, the gates were lifted and people streamed in by the thousands to see the wonders of the world collected at Chicago. And then the Parliament of Religions commenced its sessions. The West came well prepared; the Occidenta' mind offered its best. Men of distinction, orators, men of learning and high dignitaries of the different churches faced the vast assembly. And the audience was all-expectant.

The East was represented by men of different Oriental faiths. A picturesque gathering they were, these men so dignified, wearing coloured turbans, some in long robes, white and yellow and red. A pleasing picture, this array of heathens, their faces so calm and still so expressive, their eyes large and with a mysterious look. "If they were only Christians," was the sentimental sigh of the church-ladies. But they were not Christians. Some of them even were idolaters. Terrible thought! For little did they who lamented the lot of these men, surmise that some of these brown-faced teachers had more of the Christ-spirit within them, than they themselves possessed. And far was it from them to expect that there was a great surprise in store for that august assembly.

Many a speaker unburdened his soul in eloquent speech, as one by one, they rose on the platform. The audience listened with more or less patience and attention. But they wanted to hear these strange men from the East, who sat there like statues, apparently little moved by what went on before them. There was one amongst these who had been singled out by the audience as the most striking figure. The West is not blind to beauty. Those brilliant eyes, exceptionally large, that perfectly chiselled face, the erect and well-formed frame,—a majestic figure. This was the Swami Vivekananda.

But what would his lips disclose should once they open to speak? What strange superstitious ideas would they reveal to the expectant audience? They became impatient to hear him. Would he never rise? It was past morning. They had sat there many hours. When would come his turn? A moment!—The chairman moves. He bends in his direction.—A few whispering words.—At last the figure rises. The face is calm as an unruffled ocean. The eyes look far out into space. Is he inspired?

A few steps forward and the Swami Vivekananda stands before his audience.—

There is pin-drop silence.—One sweeping glance over the vast assembly and the lips open. The voice is sonorous, clear and distinct.—“Sisters and Brothers of America!”

The first words are spoken. And these words will go down in the history of religions. “Sisters and Brothers of America!”

An electric shock went through the audience. Here was inspiration indeed; a heart laying itself open before the world. Here, in half a sentence, the culture of an ancient race expressed itself. Unseen hands clasped hands. A world-soul had touched the finest, the noblest string of the human heart. “Sisters and Brothers of America!” The words were few, but the man stood revealed.

In an instant the Parliament of Religions had found itself. Its meaning, its object, its aim stood revealed in this one expression. “Sisters and Brothers of America!” Glorious utterance! The East had touched the West; separating oceans dried up, the world stood united. For one short moment at least, barriers dropped, colour of skin was forgotten, difference in attire was overlooked, peculiarity in manners did no longer count. Man stood face to face with man.

Another moment of silence. The lips open again. But who could sit there unmoved; who could listen? The heart had been touched. The stirred-up feeling was too overpowering and it gave way in an outburst of enthusiastic applause. The Swami Vivekananda, the heathen from distant India, was the master of the situation. In five short words he had formulated the ideas that half-consciously each one present had struggled to express. Swami Vivekananda, the prophet, had sounded the key to which the further progress of the Parliament was to be attuned.

Here was a master who had revealed man to man, who with one stroke had cleared the mental horizon, who had brought to the surface what is best and noblest in man,—the recognition that we are all children of one Parent, of that very one Parent, whose bless-

ings had been invoked at the opening of the session.

The rest of the story is known to you all. How during the following sessions the people clamoured for a few words from the lips of the Hindu monk. And how they would sit for hours to hear a few sentences from the sage of India.

And what a message he brought! For he always kept the standard high. The opening sentence was, as it were, the theme, of which his following addresses were beautiful variations. Always impersonal, his message was for his Sisters and Brothers in America. And America then represented the world. For the Parliament of Religions was a world-Parliament.

Swami Vivekananda had come to Chicago to share with the world, to give freely to all humanity, that which it had taken him all his life to gather. He asked for no recognition, for no reward. He gave as Jesus gave, as Buddha gave, as his own Master had given,—the bread of life, without price.

He started no sect, he initiated few disciples. He was contented to sow the seed, that all might reap the harvest. “I do not ask you to become my followers,” he said, “I want to help you to become better men and better women.” And he spoke from their own scriptures, and he spoke of their own Saviour. And from the Hindu scriptures he used what would illustrate and strengthen their own belief. “I have not come to make you Hindus,” he said on another occasion, “I have come to make you better Christians.” But he never tried to hide his own inheritance, that ancient culture, the accumulation of centuries of high thinking and right living, that culture which stands behind every sentence of even the oldest of Indian scriptures. And saturated as he was with the teachings of the sages of his own land, he would pour out story after story, he would quote sloka after sloka from Purana and Sruti. And this he would often do to explain and point out the beauty and poetry of their own Bible.

It was gracious ; it was exceedingly generous. "I do not wish to break down," he said, "I want to erect and strengthen. I preach tolerance, for all religions contain truth." And in his melodious voice he would chant in Sanskrit and then give in English that beautiful gem from the Upanishads : "As different rivers having their source in different places, all mingle their water in the sea, so, oh Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee." And then from the Gita : "Whosoever comes to Me, through whatever form, I reach him. All men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me."

There was a message for the West,—all religions, when sincerely practised, lead to God ! Different religions are so many paths that lead to him !

And before the minds of those present, flitted dark pictures of the past. How man had slain man, for religion's sake ; how thousands upon thousands of human beings, men and women of the same blood, had butchered each other in the name of God.

Rack of torture, burning-pyre and guillotine had disappeared, but did not the rancour of religious strife still embitter many a human heart ? Was not sect still opposed to sect ? Roman Catholic against Protestant, Protestant against Roman Catholic ? One denomination scorning the other ?

Once more Light had come from the East. The light was now shining before them. And under the soothing influence of that benign light, it was brought home to this vast audience, that they were all sisters and brothers, children of one heavenly Father, fellow-pilgrims on their way to God.

And of that heavenly Father, the Swami Vivekananda spoke to the Christians of the West. And he explained how the same heavenly Father is worshipped in India and how the Hindus also worship Him as the Divine Mother of the universe, and then he

went farther and told that God is sometimes worshipped as the divine Child and even as the Beloved, the divine Spouse. And then the Swami told them of the final vision of the Yogis in Samadhi. How in the solitude of the Himalayan forest, these heroic men had meditated on the ultimate Truth, how they dared to penetrate deeper into the mystery of Being, brushing aside all limiting visions, till they stood face to face with the Absolute and God was realised as "He, who is the one life in a universe of death, as He, who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world, as that One, who is the only Soul, of which all souls are but delusive manifestations."

Such revelations were startling. It was new in the West. But gradually the Swami won ground. And those who loved him and followed him, understood that he did not destroy, but that he led onward. For no hope was blasted, no vision scorned, no ideal knocked on the head. But there was guidance and advice and suggestion. The child was lifted till it could stand, it was led by the hand till it could walk alone. Always the next sign-post was pointed out. "It is good to be born in a church," Swamiji said, "but not to die there. Reach farther than churches can possibly take you. Have your own belief, but try to expand. Let your vision broaden, let your mental horizon extend. Churches and doctrines are the hedges to protect the tender plant. But they must be broken down that the plant may become a tree."

And so he pointed out how the belief in heaven, as held by the Christians, is but a halting place on the way to Mukti ; how salvation is the stepping-stone on which to reach divine wisdom ; how love for God must lead to realisation of God and how the Personal God is but one aspect of Brahman.

And of Jesus he spoke and of Buddha and of Sri Krishna and sometimes of his own master. And he told the Christians that these were all alike sons of God.

This was the path by which Swamiji led his disciples. They were never the losers,

they were always the gainers. For good, they were shown the better, for the small, greater. It was an intellectual and a spiritual expansion.

To say that Eastern thought was entirely unknown in the West till the advent of the Swami Vivekananda, is not correct. Western scholars had given us some of the Hindu scriptures in our own language. But to very few, the teaching as it stood, was intelligible. Theosophy had made us acquainted with two great principles, the law of Karma and reincarnation. But their teaching was mostly culled from the Puranas. It is therefore that we hailed the Swami Vivekananda as the first authoritative exponent to the West of the ideas of the Vedas and the Upanishads. His exposition was clear and comprehensible. It was masterly. He brought order out of

chaos. He sifted. And Mahatmas and astral bodies and elementals went with the chaff. "No mystery-mongering," he said, "it weakens the brain. No secret societies, religion must be opened to all." And I remember how I myself had once joined a religious society. But I had to withdraw. For when I asked for the practical application of their teaching and for demonstration of what they claimed to have acquired, I found no response. Neither could I get admittance to their esoteric meetings.

What a relief then was it to myself and others, to come in contact with Swamiji and the other Swamis of the Ramkrishna Mission. For with them, the practical side of religion meant everything. And they freely opened their spiritual treasures to one and all.

(To be concluded).

#### AN ODE.

#### CAROLI. DEMETER.

Rush o'er the world of war,  
Chaos and ruin,  
Rush o'er all nations' woes,  
The gasps of death between,

Vivekananda's name.

Over the earth to brood,  
Mighty, Supreme;  
Spirit of strength and bliss,  
Life-giving hymn,

Vivekananda's name.

Heart of adamant, monarch of men,  
Of thine plenitude 'pon us do rain,  
Visit with thy power ever Time's eternal  
shore,  
Mightily awake,  
Never us forsake,  
Thou that dwell'st in light, shine evermore.

Raise thy song that lie  
On earth's quagmire lost,  
Raise us, O bless us,  
The lowly, passion-tost.

Thou, O best of Mother Earth!  
Thou that hads't thy birth,  
Dressed in thy breast-plate of superhuman  
scale  
Of freemen of a heavenly growth,  
Angels of the plighted troth  
For work in his own trackless seas in the  
wind and gale,  
Holy spirit, hail!

Holy spirit, hail!  
Over the earth's shadows fly,  
Light up the murky sky,  
O thou, Gleam of Shakti, with Her power  
wrought,

Child of the Superman,  
Arch'tect to bridge the span  
Of Life that is to be, through life with  
    horrors fraught.

Teacher Thou, of tempest, fire,  
Thoughts that burn and glow,  
Mightily do us inspire  
In thy wake to follow.

Thou, O strange Alchemist!  
Over us do ponder, list,  
Of thy power, in our veins, O pour!  
In thine own huge alembic,  
On flames that burn terrific,  
Make us all soldiers of the pure, evermore  
    Aud adore!

Holy, Holy, Holy,  
Peace circumambient,  
Holy, Holy, Holy,  
Life, all-transcendent.

O'er earth's shadows see  
Blazed in starry sheen  
"Hesper-Phosphor, double-star,"  
All the stars between,  
Vivekananda's name.

All 'harmony,' all 'peace,'  
Not 'dissension,'  
Joy in the Real proclaiming,  
Holy consummation.  
Vivekananda's name.  
Vivekananda day.)

VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from page 45)

प्रह्लानन्दरसानुभूतिकलितैः पूर्वैः सुरीतैर्द  
 युष्मद्वाक्लशोजिभैः श्रुतिसुखैर्वाक्यामृतैः सेचय।  
 संततं भवतापदावदहनञ्ज्यालाभिरेनं प्रभो  
 धन्यास्ते भवदीक्षणाक्षणगतेः पात्रीहृताः  
 स्वीकृताः ॥३६॥

39. O Lord, with thy nectar-like speech, sweetened by the enjoyment of the elixir-like bliss of Brahman, pure, cooling to a degree, issuing in streams from thy lips as from a pitcher, and delightful to the ear,—do thou sprinkle me who am tormented by worldly afflictions as by the tongues of a forest-fire. Blessed are those on whom even a passing glance of thine eye lights, accepting them as thine own.

[ Stripped of metaphor the Sloka would mean : Take pity on me and teach me the way out of this world and its afflictions. ]

कथं तरेयं भवसिष्युमेतं  
का वा गतिमै कन्तोऽस्त्युपायः ।  
जाने न किंचित्कृपयाव मां प्रभो  
संसारदःखन्तिमातन्त्र ॥४०॥

40. How to cross this ocean of phenomenal existence, what is to be my fate, and which of the means should I adopt—as to these I know nothing. Condescend to save me, O Lord, and describe at length how to put an end to the misery of this relative existence.

[Which of the means: Among the various and often conflicting means prescribed in the Shastras, which am I adopt? ]

तथा वदन्तं शरणागतं स्वं  
संसारदायानक्षत्रपतसम् ।  
निरीक्षय कालयथरसाद्रहष्टुषा  
दयादभीतिं सहसा महात्मा ॥४१॥

41. As he thus speaks, tormented by the afflictions of the world—which is like a forest on fire—and seeking his protection, the saint eyes him with a glance softened with pity and spontaneously bids him give up all fear.

विद्वान्स तस्मा उपसत्तिमीयुषे  
मुमुक्ष्वे साधु यथोक्तकारिणे ।  
प्रशान्तचित्ताय यमान्विताय  
तत्त्वोपदेशं कृपयैव कुर्यात् ॥४२॥

42. To him who has sought his protection, thirsting for liberation, who duly obeys the injunctions of the scriptures, who is of a pacified mind, and endowed with calmness,—(to such a one) the sage proceeds to inculcate the truth out of sheer grace:

[This verse is an adaptation of Mundaka Upanishad, I. ii. 13.]

*To him who &c.—The adjectives imply that he is a qualified aspirant.* ]

मा भेष विद्वन्स्तव नास्त्यपायः  
संसारसिन्धोस्तरणोऽस्त्यपायः ।

येनैव याता यत्योऽस्य पारं  
तमेव मार्गं तव निर्दिशामि ॥४३॥

43. Fear not, O learned one, there is no death for thee; there is a means of crossing this sea of relative existence; that very way by which sages have gone beyond it, I shall inculcate to thee.

अस्त्युपायो महान्कश्चित्सारभयनाशनः ।  
तेन तीर्त्वा भवाम्भोग्यं परमानन्दमाप्स्यसि ॥४४॥

44. There is a sovereign means which puts an end to the fear of relative existence; through that thou wilt cross the sea of Samsara and attain bliss supreme.

वेदान्तार्थविचारेण जायते ज्ञानमुच्चमम् ।  
तेनात्यन्तिकसंसारदुःखनाशो भवत्यनु ॥४५॥

45. Reasoning on the meaning of the Vedanta leads to efficient knowledge, which is immediately followed by the total annihilation of the misery born of relative existence.

[*Efficient knowledge*—the highest knowledge, which consists of the realisation of the identity of the individual soul with Brahman.]

(To be continued.)

## THE FIFTY-SIXTH BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

### At Belur Math.

The fifty-sixth birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda came off on the 3rd of February last, when, as usual, the Belur Math held its celebration in the midst of a very large concourse of the Swamis, Bhaktas and admirers of all sects and creeds. This year the two different celebrations, that of the "Tithi-puja" and the public festivity both fell on the same day and the conjoint glory of the occasion was therefore by no means the lesser as when severally performed.

The Math premises, the 'Thakur's' temple and the little 'Samadhi' temple of the Swamiji wore their gala appearance on this day, with flags and banners floating in the wind and the floral adornments inside each, all very deftly executed and made charming to look upon. The spacious courtyard was canopied over and on the south side of it

was placed a big portrait of the Swamiji, in his mendicant garb, the whole thing being embowered in the midst of a very artistic setting of moss, flowers and creepers of all kinds. At the very dawn of the day, there was the 'usha-kirtan,' the chant which took all hearts captive by the simplicity and sincerity of the whole choir and its cue was caught up and sustained throughout the day by various manner of songs and musical performances, now the rapturous melody of the Vaishnava lyrics and now again, the 'Mother-chants,' the 'Kali-kirtan' which has of late years grown to be quite a favourite with the Math members themselves and is as universally liked by the laity of all classes. The 'Kirtan' of the Madras Bhaktas, all in its native style, was quite a novel feature and attracted huge interest. The visitors of the day were past enumeration and it was towards the after-

noon that the crowd reached to its zenith. A good part of the Math grounds was taken over with equipages of all kinds and the river-front practically swarmed over with boats, from sunrise to sundown.

The rich and the poor alike were sumptuously treated, the never-failing courtesy and the pleasing address of the Swamis and the volunteers for the occasion, acting as a leaven to the bread of charity and good-will so generously and religiously distributed as the order of the day. The proceedings were throughout graced by the august presence of the Swami Brahmananda this year. Everybody keenly felt, however, the absence of the Swami Premananda (now convalescent) whose sweet, saintly personality was wont to lend an added charm to the Math Utsavas every year.

#### In Calcutta.

At the instance of the Calcutta Vivekananda Society Swamiji's birthday anniversary was celebrated in February last, at the University Institute Hall, College Square. The Hon'ble Maharajadhiraj of Burdwan presided. The Honorary Secy. read the annual report. Then the President in the course of a Bengali speech dwelt on the remarkable selflessness of Swami Vivekananda who had travelled to America and other distant lands at the behest of his master, Sri Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, with a view to teaching the people of the West the truth of the Vedanta philosophy. The most practical way of paying a tribute to the memory of the Swamiji would be by furthering the cause of his mission work.

MM. Pramatha Nath Tarkabhusan in paying a glowing tribute to Swami Vivekananda eulogised the speeches of the illustrious Sannyasi. After his return from America, Swami Vivekananda in addressing a vast audience had said that India was destined to conquer the world spiritually. The Swami at that meeting had also pointed out the cloud, then not bigger than a man's hand, that had gathered on the Western horizon and which was fraught with dire consequences to follow, sooner or later. Who knew that Vivekananda's prophecy pregnant with celestial fire would not be fulfilled?

Dr. Prabhudayal Shastri referred to the Swamiji's insight into the Vedanta philosophy and his references in connection with that were being demonstrated by the recent scientific discoveries. He was followed by Babu Panchcowri Banerji. MM. Satis Chandra Vidyabhushan proposed a vote of thanks to the chair, after which the immense gathering dispersed.

#### At Ranchi.

The birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at Duranda, Ranchi, with great *éclat*, on the 3rd Feb., '18. Puja, Homa and San-kirtan were performed from 7 to 10 in the morning. Reading from Kathopanishad, Sankirtan, and distribution of Prasad to the public were the

afternoon programme from 4 to 9 p. m. Sj. Sarat Ch. Chakravarty B. A., a disciple of Swamiji, delivered an impressive lecture on the life and teachings of the great Swamiji carrying the audience with him. Another Bhakta of Swamiji gave a hearty meal to 600 poor Narayanas at his own expense.

#### At Benares.

The 56th Birthday Anniversary of Swamiji was celebrated publicly on the 10th February, 1918, when the following programme was observed :—

1. The feeding of the poor, 1-4 p. m.
2. A lecture in English on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda by Professor Jadu Nath Sarkar, M. A., P. R. S. (Benares Hindu University), 4-5 p.m.
3. Bhajana with music, 5-7 p. m.
4. Distribution of Prasada.

The Tithipuja had been performed with imposing solemnity on the 3rd Feb. On the 10th, before the appointed time people began to muster in crowds. The platform was nicely decorated with flowers and bunting, as suited the occasion. At 4 p. m., after an opening song by one of the Bhaktas, Professor Jadu Nath Sarkar delivered his attractive speech, to the following effect :—

Gentlemen, India has been full of eminent sages throughout the ages; and I am sure you would ask for reasons why we should select one out of the large number of our sages for celebration. What special teaching and what special principles did the great Swami give us? These questions require to be answered when we have met together to celebrate the 56th birthday of Swami Vivekananda. I will try to give a brief account of his life but there are many whom Vivekananda has left in India and Europe who can explain his teachings in more eloquent words from personal contact with him, than I can do. Swami Vivekananda was born 55 years ago in January 1863. His grandfather, father and mother were not ordinary people, and he naturally felt that he was a son of the lordly Dattas. At school and college he was very fond of discussing philosophy and there was a hunger for truth in his heart. He passed the F. A. and B. A. and was preparing for Law examination when the call came to him. As a student he discussed with his fellows what true religion was and took much interest in religious debates. He was a hard-working student and always threw his soul into whatever he undertook. He acquired knowledge and strength. It is a higher gift to acquire knowledge and impart it to others than merely to accumulate learning and thought. The accumulation of knowledge without the least possible efforts to impart the same does no good to the community nor to the cause of civilisation. The ideal of Swami Vivekananda was to read, think and talk. He studied philosophy in the B. A. course. Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal, one of his fellow-

students at the General Assembly's College, said that the aim of Vivekananda, even then, was to test his belief and accept nothing on trust, and that in consequence he passed through many phases of doubt. The key-note of his life is that he had a passion to teach and impart the knowledge which he had attained himself. Ramakrishna Paramahansa perceived what a mighty instrument Vivekananda would be in his hands. Vivekananda became the follower of Ramakrishna in the 24th year of his life, viz. 1886. He visited all parts of Hindustan often in disguise, and in the year 1893 he proceeded from Madras to Chicago, where one day it so happened that he was penniless and hungry and fainted. As he was lying on the floor, there came the image of his Guru and gave strength to his mind. This great teacher was needed even more in the West than in the East. His message, which went straight to the heart, could in no way be hidden or suppressed. All of a sudden the inhabitants of Chicago felt that Swami Vivekananda was the Messiah of the Age, who could easily move the whole world. His lectures were published and he visited England in 1895. He came back to India in 1897, as he felt that his motherland stood in great need of his service.

Vivekananda was the heart of New India; he preached the message that the life either of contemplation or of action alone is not a complete life. Railway engines even must take some rest. A man who is merely a money-making machine is an incomplete and futile man. The message that the life of action must be combined with that of contemplation is an old one, not unknown to Europe or India before. Vivekananda emphasised its supreme importance to-day. This is the only method by which we can attain to human perfection. Vivekananda preached the message to the West which had forgotten it. He showed how religion is a law of action to the strong and not merely the consolation of the weak. Religion is another word for duty and a true faith is a realisation within and without us. Vivekananda, when a student of philosophy at Calcutta, tested and tried to realise within himself the truth of the dogmas he was called upon to accept. He moved step by step in his spiritual development till he met Ramakrishna and found what convinced him as the truth. He even doubted and tested his Guru before surrendering to him. His belief was strong that what is true must assert itself, and all true religions must lead to self-realisation in the believer. God is the essence, the sum total of strength, and we must appreciate all true words spoken in every land and age. A Hindu Sannyasin, he could admire the Saracen conquerors of Spain and the Delhi Sultan Sher Shah; and there was appreciation of supreme truth in any form in his mind. He

said, "Even if you sin, you must sin boldly. Be not cowards. Do evil like a man, if you are bent upon doing evil. Religion cannot be a weakness." He improved his health and physique in College, and once carried off the first prize in boxing! Vivekananda held that the selfish quest of individual salvation is not true Hinduism. To get salvation our duty to society must be done. By serving the poor, you are working to complete your own manhood. Chicago is the centre of the money-making machine but the Swami preached to this "Hub of the modern world" that it must change its life. He felt after a year that India required his presence even more than England or America. Organisation and social service are the necessities of the day not only materially but even more spiritually. The true essence of Hindu asceticism is not to banish ourselves from the world in order to be free, but to obey a higher law than our individual will. "I see the Shiva in the afflicted," as he boldly declared, and relieving the misery of the poor is the best adoration of Shiva. The fruit of action belongs to God. It is man's duty merely to act. No religion can be afraid of truth. Truth conquers and not falsehood. Sin is only a form of ignorance. The message of Hinduism is that this world is not everything, that work and worship must go together. Vivekananda is the heart of New India and it is according to the fitness of things that his birthday should be celebrated wherever thoughtful Indians can congregate.

Mr. Kali Prasanna Chatterji, late Joint Editor, 'Tribune,' Lahore, then spoke very impressively and humorously in Urdu for the benefit of those who could not understand English and narrated from his personal knowledge several incidents of the life of the great Swami, who was his guest at Lahore. He said that the Swami combined the East and the West, and as the European journalist Goodwin said, "Here is a sign of both working together."

The meeting came to a close at about 7 p. m.

#### At Kankhal.

The birthday anniversary was celebrated with usual form at the R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal on the 10th Feb. Devotional songs were sung before the decorated portrait of Swamiji. Next Smi. Satyabala Devi played a devotional air to the accompaniment of the Vina, with much effect. Then followed a religious discourse by Pandit Jogindra Ch. Sarma Sankhya-Vedanta-tirtha on the life and teachings of the Swami, who held the audience for an hour and a half. He dwelt on the manifold aspect of the Swami's teaching and ended by saying that the service of our fellow-beings has been insisted on by the Swami as a special mode of religious life, and in pursuance of his gospel of service Sevashrams and Homes of Service have sprung up in different parts of the country with their

faces set towards the evolution of new forms of religious life, by directing the monastic religious impulse to the service of man.

In the afternoon the poor Narayanas who had assembled in the spacious lawn of the Sevashrama, were treated to a sumptuous feast with puri, halua, etc. It was late in the evening that they dispersed glorifying the great name of him who had again felt for them like a second Buddha.

#### At Brindaban.

The birthday anniversary of the Swamiji was celebrated at the R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, on Sunday, the 3rd Feb. 1918. The chief feature of the day was the feeding of about 350 poor Narayanas with Khichri, and nice curries and sweets.

#### At Bangalore.

The 56th birthday of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated with becoming grandeur in the Sri Ramakrishna Mutt, Bangalore, on the 10th Feb. As usual, Swamiji's picture was escorted in procession to the Mutt by Swamiji's numerous admirers. The poor were sumptuously fed and there was an appropriate Harikatha performance.

At 5.30 p. m. Mr. N. Venkatesa Iyengar commenced his lecture on the life and teachings of the Swamiji in Kannada. He dwelt feelingly on the various qualities of the Swamiji that made him known all the world over. He appealed to the people to rise above pettiness, holding the Swamiji as a great example.

Mr. K. H. Ramiah, B. A., Barr-at-law, next spoke on the same subject in English. He ably dwelt on the greatness of Swami Vivekananda as an illustrious teacher of mankind. He spoke on the personal qualities of head and heart of the Swamiji, of the great work he did as an interpreter of the East to the West, of his struggles and troubles, of his prophetic observations on social, educational and spiritual matters. He urged the importance of physical culture, of having a strong and vigorous body before expecting to possess a strong and sound mind, and exhorted the audience to become manly in thought, word and deed. Finally, he quoted passages from the speeches of the Swamiji bearing on social reform, education of the masses, sectarian disputes and the absorbing topic of the Brahmin and non-Brahmin etc. Swamiji's advice that Brahmins should come forward to elevate the non-Brahmins was listened to with approval and applause.

Under the auspices of the Vedanta Society, Bangalore Cannt., Swamiji's anniversary was celebrated on a grand scale in the premises of the C. V. S. Sabha School on the 17th Feb. At noon about a thousand poor people were sumptuously fed and food was also sent to the poor orphans of the St. Patricks Orphanage. In the afternoon there was a musical entertainment by Mr. V. T. Devaraj Mudaliar. In the evening Mr. R. A. Krishnamacarya,

B. A., delivered an inspiring lecture on the life and work of the Swamiji and also spoke about the personal conversation he had during his college days when he met Swamiji at Madras. The Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission, Basavangudi, were also present. At 7 p. m. there was a grand procession of Swami Vivekananda's pictures on a Vinnana accompanied by Bhajana parties. The procession moved through the main streets of the town, and reached the Sabha School at 9 p. m. and the proceedings were brought to a close by Mangalarathî and distribution of Prasada.

#### At Aurangabad.

Vivekananda-day was celebrated at Aurangabad under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Brotherhood. A meeting was held in the Library Hall and Sj. S. Krishna Vaidya delivered a lecture on 'Swamiji's work in the West.' Mr. D. G. Sarolker presided. The meeting came to a close after a Bengali prayer specially prepared in honour of the Swami.

#### At Jaffna.

The 56th birthday anniversary of Srimat Swami Vivekananda was celebrated by the Jaffna Vivekananda Society with great eclat, on the 4th Feb. '18. The Ramakrishna Mahavidyalayam Hall was tastefully decorated. The photos of the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission with suitable mottos from the sayings of the Master adorned the pillars and walls. On the dais were kept the garlanded photos of the Master and Swami Vivekananda.

After Bhajana from 8 to 10 a. m., Puja was performed, and about 200 Bhaktas partook of the Prasada. The feeding of about 300 poor people lasted from 1 to 4 p. m. The photo of the Swami was next taken in procession with music which reached back the Vidyalayam at 6 p. m. A meeting was then held at the Vidyalayam Hall. Mr. S. Kandiah, Proctor S. C., President of the Society, took the chair. Pundit S. Maiyaganam delivered a very learned and interesting lecture in Tamil on "The Life and Work of Srimat Swami Vivekananda," in which he laid special stress on the deep love the Swami had for his country and his compatriots. He was followed by Mr. S. Thyagarajapillai, who spoke on Vedanta. Then the Jaffna Vivekananda Society's Tract No. I.—"The Messages of Swami Vivekananda," translated into Tamil, was freely distributed.

The 56th Birthday Anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda was also celebrated with becoming religious rites and feeding of poor Narayanas at the Ramakrishna Home, Madras; Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati; Rk. Math, Allahabad; Rk. Ashrama, Sargachi (Murshidabad); Rk. Ashrama Kishanpur (Dehra Dun); Vivekananda Ashrama, Kuala Lumpur (F. M. S.); Shanti Ashrama, Totapalli Hills (Godavari) and other places. For want of space we reserve some further reports of the celebration for the next issue of P. B.

# ग्रन्थालय ग्रन्थालय

दक्षिण भारत

प्राप्ति वराभिरोधत ।

Katha Upanishad, I. iii. 4



Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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[ No. 261

## CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

[Translated from Bengali.]

### XIV.

Place :—The rented *Math* at Belur.

Time : 1898 A. D.

Subject : The installation of Sri Ramakrishna on the site of the new *Math*. ]

To-day Swamiji is to perform a sacrifice and install Sri Ramakrishna on the site of the new *Math*. The disciple has been staying at the *Math* since the night before, with a view to witnessing the installation ceremony.

In the morning Swamiji had his bath in the Ganges and entered the worship-room. Then taking the worshipper's seat he took in both his palms at the same time all the flowers and Bilva leaves that were there in the flower-tray, offered them at the consecrated Páduká (slippers) of Sri Ramakrishna and fell to meditation—a superb

spectacle! The gentle and beaming radiance of his person aglow with the lustre of religion, filled the chapel with a sort of wonderful luminosity, as it were! Swamis Premananda and others stood at the chapel-door.

Meditation and worship over, preparations were now made for going to the new *Math* premises. Swamiji himself took on his right shoulder the ashes of Sri Ramakrishna's body preserved in a copper casket, and led the van. The disciple in company of the other Sannyasins brought up the rear. The banks of the Ganges

resounded with the music of bells and conchs and the river seemed to dance on in joyous symphony. On his way Swamiji said to the disciple, "Thakur had said to me, 'Wherever you will take me on your shoulders, there I will go and stay, be it under a tree or in a hut.' It is therefore that I am myself carrying him on my shoulders to the new Math grounds. Know it for certain that Thakur will keep his seat fixed there, for the welfare of the many (बहुजनहिताय), for a long time to come."

Disciple.— When was it that Thakur said this to you?

Swamiji.— (Pointing to the Sadhus of the Math) Didn't you hear from them?— It was at the Cossipur garden.

Disciple.— I see. It was on this occasion, I suppose, that the split took place between Thakur's Sannyasin and householder disciples regarding the privilege of serving him?

Swamiji.— Yes, but not exactly a 'split,'—it was only a misunderstanding, that's all. Rest assured that among those that are Thakur's devotees, that have *truly* obtained his grace, there is no sect or schism, there *cannot* be,—be they householders or Sannyasins. As to that kind of slight misunderstanding, do you know what it was due to? Well, each devotee colours Sri Ramakrishna in the light of his own understanding and each forms his own idea of him from his peculiar standpoint. He was, as it were, a great Sun, and each one of us is eyeing him, as it were, through a different kind of coloured glass, and coming to look upon that one Sun as parti-coloured. Of course, it is quite true that this leads to schism in course of time. But then, such schisms rarely occur in the lifetime of those who are fortunate enough to have

come in direct contact with an Avatara. The effulgence of that Personality, who takes pleasure only in his Self, dazzles their eyes, and sweeps away pride, egotism, and narrow-mindedness from their minds. Consequently they find no opportunity to create sects and party factions. They are content to offer Him their heart's worship, each in his own fashion.

Disciple.— Sir, do the devotees of the Avatara, then, view Him differently notwithstanding their knowing Him to be God, and does this lead the succeeding generations of their followers to limit themselves within narrow bounds and form various little sects?

Swamiji.— Quite so. Hence sects are bound to form in course of time. Look, for instance, how the followers of Chaitanya Deva have been divided into two or three hundred sects; and those of Jesus hold thousands of creeds. But all those sects without exception follow Chaitanya Deva and Jesus and none else.

Disciple.— Then, perhaps, Sri Ramakrishna's followers, too, will be divided in course of time into lots of sects?

Swamiji.— Well, of course. But then this Math that we are building will harmonise all creeds, all standpoints. Just as Thakur held highly liberal views, this Math, too, will be a centre for propagating similar ideas. The blaze of universal harmony that will shoot forth from here will flood the whole world.

While all this talk was going on, the party reached the Math premises. Swamiji took the casket down from his shoulder, placed it on the carpet spread on the ground and bowed before it touching the ground with his forehead. Others too followed suit.

Then Swamiji again sat for worship. After going through the Puja he lighted the sacrificial fire, made oblations to it, and himself cooking Páyasa (milk-rice with sugar) with the help of his brother-disciples, offered it to Sri Ramakrishna. Probably also he initiated certain householders on the spot that day. All this ceremony being done, Swamiji cordially addressed the assembled gentlemen and said, "Pray to-day all of you to the holy feet of Sri Ramakrishna, with your body, mind and speech, that the great Avatara of this cycle that He is, He may, for the welfare of the many, and for the happiness of the many—**वह्निहिताय वह्निम्-सुखाय**—reside in this holy spot from this day for a great length of time, and ever continue to make it the unique centre of harmony amongst all religions." Everyone prayed like that with folded palms. Swamiji next called the disciple and said, "None of us (Sannyasins) have any longer the right to take back this casket of Thakur, for we have installed him here to-day. It behoves on you, therefore, to take it on your head back (to Nilambar Babu's garden)." Seeing that the disciple hesitated to touch the casket Swamiji said: "No fear, touch it, you have my order." The disciple gladly obeyed Swamiji's injunction, lifted the casket on his head, and moved on, thinking himself blessed to have got the privilege of touching it through the Guru's command. The disciple went first, next came Swamiji, and the rest followed. Swamiji said to the disciple on the way, "Thakur has to-day climbed on your head and is blessing you. Take care, never let your mind think of anything transitory, from this day forth." Before crossing a small bridge, Swamiji

again said to him, "Beware, now, you must move very cautiously."

Thus all safely reached the Math and rejoiced. Swamiji now entered into a conversation with the disciple, in the course of which he said, "Though the will of Sri Ramakrishna, his Dharmakshetra—sanctified spot—has been established to-day. A twelve years' anxiety is off my head. Do you know what I am thinking of at this moment?—This math will be a centre of learning and spiritual discipline. Householders of a virtuous turn like yourselves will build houses on the surrounding land and live there, and Sannyasins, men of renunciation, will live in the centre, while on that plot of land on the south of the Math, buildings will be erected for English and American disciples to live in. How do you like this idea?

Disciple.—Sir, it is indeed a wonderful fancy of yours.

Swamiji.—A fancy do you call it? Not at all, everything will come about in time. I am but laying the foundation. There will be lots of further developments in future. Some portion of it I shall live to work out. And I shall infuse into you fellows various ideas, which you will work out in future. It will not do merely to listen to great principles. You must apply them in the practical field, turn them into constant practice. What will be the good of cramming the high-sounding dicta of the scriptures? You have first to grasp the teachings of the Shastras, and then to work them out in practical life. Do you follow me? This is called practical religion.

(To be continued.)

## OCCASIONAL NOTES.

**M**AN wants to reach unto God. He cannot always rest satisfied with this shallow and puny cribbled and coffined existence of his, the life which he has been leading since human life first dawned on earth. He must rise and struggle and seek out the way. But does he always know the meaning of his life, the thing that he wants, the thing that will satisfy all the yearnings and mad hankerings of his soul? And so, past the days of nature-apotheosis and all other primitive kinds of worship, to his systems he goes, the priests and the community, the Rabbis and the synagogues. But he is not always very successful in his choice. Time was when he could accommodate himself very acquiescently to any ready-made conception of God and rest satisfied thereby. But now he has his reason to provide for. His intellect has pointed out to him the necessity of knowing God and at first, the cravings of his intellect he must satisfy along with his feelings through a reasoned conception of the God he knows, the God he sees. He has not yet faith enough altogether to renounce his rationalistic tendencies, so he touches the hem of the garment of a supernatural and supra-intellectual God. All that he sought for once in the dim dark alleys of his forest home in the by-gone ages, he must seek to find out now in the gas-lit cross-ways of the busy thoroughfares of the civilised world. But still he has hardly any chance of faring better in his quest than very often to fall either into the class-grip or the community-grip or failing these, to develop into a crass and self-sufficient rationalist

with the most desperate religious views.

One is apt to forget that there is a better way of looking at things and that is mainly in the way of the kind of *relation* which one wants to establish between his soul and the Oversoul of the universe. He has only tried for a *relation* in the established ecclesiastical manner, with all their grim array of theories and nicely determined divisions of credal codes to the exclusion of that life-touch, which is of the very essence of religion itself. So let him try otherwise now. He has simply tried to nurture his soul on the husks of an ecclesiastical dogma while the grain was all stored up in front of him, quite untouched. The prime question to determine in the matter is—are these mere external accretions the faith of man constituted in its total aspect? Why not try to get at the kernel of the matter? What is the life that speaks forth through these? The community might take the outer excrescences to be the cream of that very life itself which first gave meaning to them all, but truth shall surely not bear these. The sage thus perverted by misrepresentation, would, if he were alive once more, burn with righteous indignation and try to reinstate the God-consciousness that belonged to him in its full glory once more for the bewildered gaze and consideration of his, in a sense, apostate followers. For do they not know, the sages of the world, who lived the true life, the value and significance of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds or for the matter of that, the hair-splitting discussions of the scholastics, the Naiyaikas

and Mimausakas of the world for the realisation of the true soul of man?

Reduced into one central and pivotal truth—it is but the belief in human personality that is the bed-rock of the churches of the world.—The personality of a sage, a master, a God-man, an Avatara in fact, howsoever they are expressed and in whatsoever a manner. And what is their aim?—they want to raise and restore the human mind to the Ideal. The multitude only live for them; they are mere abandoned preys to the Ideal. When they come into contact with these mighty hearts palpitating with the throb of the Great Divine, they are electrified. They find the way, the truth and the life. And that is how men seek for God, but then what of God Himself? The fact is, it is God seeking for men as much as men seeking for God. Although hence also come the diversity of creeds, the multifariousness of sects, the formation of castes, the corporation of bodies—we make God after our own image, according as the light reveals unto us. The Absolute is there no doubt but it is the relative, the temporal, and the local that very often triumph over the universal and fasten upon the passing phases of these, the many diverging foci of looking at the Absolute, its agreement of the total whole. All the differences of outlook in social and in religious matters also arise from this. It is that *relational* aspect of the Absolute which so long as human minds are differently constituted and differently worked there must remain—disparities in social customs, faith and mode of worship as well. But the look-out of humanity should for ever be that these do not grow so dense as to mystify the face of the Real Truth itself.

The God-man knows this fact more than anybody else, more than you and I do. We are so apt to confound things. They do not confound—they point out the way strongly, sternly. They can rise above the differences, so only they meet their companion-souls on earth. And them they break not, but fulfil. And that should be our index of judging them and us as well in their light, namely—Life.

Only very often the past history of the world takes us aback by the number of lapses in the reverse manner of the human kind. Blood has been shed more copiously for the upholding of matters of faith than in any other cause,—and this more in the West and hardly much in the East, here, with the result that while the East has progressed most favourably with spiritual culture and spiritual enlightenment, the West has lagged behind for centuries, with a mere short oasis of *Sadhana* in the midst of the dark and the modern ages of Europe, with the inauguration of which latter came in all the most blood-curdling strifes of the Christendom. Now it is the Crusades and now again it is the Protestant and Roman Catholic splits, culminating in the treaty of Westphalia, a treaty of its kind which is unknown to the Hindu civilisation of India, where spirituality reached its acme centuries before the historical era. Religion, to the Semitic-Hebrew conception, was of a naively realistic kind and hence the paramountcy of the Khalifas of faith with sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, while in the other phase of it the Hebrew mind always in the look-out for a sign and a wonder—a Messiah coming with God-given gifts in his hand to save the one only chosen nation of his—a theory which may

succeed well with the apocalyptic vision of a heaven on earth, rather than with the word of God and word made flesh of the evangelical John. Jesus came to these Hebrews again, but he did not receive the recognition his due, for did he not say that his kingdom was not of this earth, but of heaven only and that the kingdom of heaven was within himself? And so to the wall he must go—this God-man on earth; his thaumaturgy was not sufficient for the wonder-agape Hebrew mind at large.

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But Jesus the Christ had another chance. This time the Semitic-Hebrew allied itself with the speculative genius of the Aryan people, the Teutonic group especially. The true Aryan speculative power being not with them, we find many new interpretations, analogies and elaborations, polemics and exegetics. The church gave theories to explain the man but the man himself was forgot, buried in the ruins and rehabilitations of ruins of theories on the structure that he supplied to the world with his life. The phenomenon is not a new one altogether in the history of the religions of the world. The outer trappings serve their purpose only so long as they emphasise and further the needs of the realisation of the Ideal. That period over, only the differences exist while the Truth languishes beyond the pale of the ecclesiastical cloisters. It cries out of the dust heap for a resurrection. Will men pay heed to it?

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Theology no doubt serves a good purpose but the question of all questions is—what purpose should it serve? Is it mere quibbling on the regard that we pay to the teacher, or is it incorporating ourselves with him in very fact? The same-

ness of vision is the birthright of the Saint who has realised his divine nature in full. How far have we progressed up to that? If we have not, then certainly no Jesus, no Buddha, no Sri Krishna for us. And yet we cannot say not no to any one of these, for we believe in men—in ourselves, and they are by consensus of spiritual opinion the greatest men of their kind. If one wants to be *relational* with them—for to be relational with them means the finding out of our true nature—has he got nothing to do but to seek out the differences betwixt the tweedledum and the tweedledee? The forgetful missionary is the dread upas-tree to all existing spiritual culture. He can get together a sect but he often-times forgets the Fact of the sect. The fact of Christ, we all know, is greater than the missionary fact about him.

Undoubtedly the rationalist has his own faults also. He abhors the niceties of the metaphysical and theological arguments but only to pin his faith on another and even greater superstition sometimes, namely, his own positive notions which might very well be called the 'realism of the eye,' while the idol of the exclusively theological mind is the 'realism of the brain.' But none of these are sufficient to give us a true glimpse of the Truth as it is in itself. It is for this that we have to cultivate the true Aryan notion of the 'Realism of the soul,'—which M. Arnold has mistakenly called a mere metaphysical genius, derived from his study of the Teutonic specimens of intellect—the supreme God-vision, which is possible for living men even. And that explains really a great deal—'the God-vision on earth'—it is just the thing for all humanity to ponder over with rapt attention and

gather the force of it within them. Is God-vision really possible? Yes, in greater and even greater measures. The men that have the greater are the Gods-incarnate on earth.

This God-vision may belong to the superhuman orders of existence but humanity is not concerned with them in any direct way. And if they cannot be outside the human sphere, they cannot very well be anything totally beyond the human reason to grasp, and yet they must exist. Or else no relation is possible between the mundane and the supramundane worlds save only for a *Jnani*, but a true *Jnani* has the sense of Divine oneness unchecked with him, in a *continuum*, so he can dispose of it in the best manner. The mind of man runs along ransacking all through the gamuts of all the human and divine possibilities till at last, in its eagerness to seize upon the vision concretised—for that is a very necessary and psychological consequence of the inner nature of man—it lights upon the God-man conception, the 'Avatar' of the Hindu thought. And so it is seen that it is a man they are seeking for, after all their pains, nay, a very life, identifying himself with their highest impulses and yet in a mysterious way further ennobling them, etherealising them, giving them the wished-for turn towards the Absolute conception. Yes, his is the coming down for the lifting up—the middle-term between God and man, a Christ, a Krishna, a Buddha, a Chaitanya, a Ramakrishna, one and all, but never the definitive, the empirical man standing for the Christ-soul, the Krishna-soul, or the Buddha-soul. The Avatar links the man with the god; his function is not a mere part of it, but the whole of it. Were he to appropriate the worship of his adherents

as man himself, divested of the consciousness of his oneness with the Divine Godhead, he were a traitor, a blaspheming fallen soul. He is divine and can the divine quarrel with his many manifestations on the earth? The test of the Avatar lies in the strength of his persuasion to be perfect all of us, even as our Father in heaven is perfect. We offer worship to him but he offers worship to us all as well for he can and does recognise the divinity within us. The one begotten son is only the figment of clerical imagination. Truth always triumphs, not man-made but divine, and on the high Sinai-peak of the mental and spiritual elevation of all humanity stands a figure, august and serene but surpassingly bright, in whom the many facets of the God-men on earth are seen reflected in a gorgeous play of light and shade—the body of the Soul eternal, so figured, difficult to differentiate or to say deliberately, dogmatically, which surpasses, the one or the other.

Thus, the life of an Avatar is nothing but the life superlative on earth. If spiritual uplift be the highest end and aim of human existence, then surely are these Avatars the highest fruits of human endeavour after the divine. But that is only speaking from our standpoint. If man makes the image of God, God hastens to return the same compliment to him and these are His appointed souls, parts and parcel in His existence, not like the Leibnitzian monads, but in Him and of Him, in an organic conception of God, who answers to the devout prayers of the human heart, the Father in Heaven of the Christian theology. All the endeavours of our mind should be to find a relation with these God-men on earth, provided we understand the need and necessity for the same.

Or it might be as Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahansa has said, and we have before indicated, "he who can register his name at the head-office,"—that is, can easily relate himself to the Absolute, "need not bother to send in his name at the branch-offices," that is, relate himself to those whom we call the Incarnations of God. The average humanity has always his doubts and his wavering which the priests and ecclesiastics can hardly explain to satisfaction. In these crucial periods of his existence, he feels the need of the hand of God to descend upon him, to give him a lift out of the slough of despair and put him on to the way of the eternal city—the perfection of the human souls. And God is ever ready to meet these hopeless ones of the universe. To touch His feet for once, in His human shape, is to dispel the ignorance of ages at once, not like the unbelieving miracle-mongers of old or the dogmatically clamouring ones for the name of a man or a sect, or even like the positivistic rationalist, moving in his own narrow groove, but like the mighty victor is his march on earth now, a long triumphal procession, while the captives of the eye and the intellect rend the skies with their wailings and weepings and gnash of teeth, in the wake of his chariot-wheels. It is this Life personified that we must henceforth learn to recognise in the history of the world before we seek to consummate the highest we are capable of, in our own lives, for, there lies the objective test of our spiritual strength, to recognise greatness in others. The path of the Jnani is not strewn with roses and once if the ideal slips from his vision he is lost and very often irretrievably and inextricably lost, but the Bhakta who always holds by his symbol, goes always by the path of his soul-experience, not so easily liable to fall

and he becomes in time a living witness of the living God—and there lets his soul abide for ever.

And that is how, incidentally, we have traced the attitude of the Hindu mind towards these Incarnations of God, all through the history of this nation. He knows an Avatara instinctively where other nations only hum and haw and speak of the standardization of religious values, in an exclusive sense. The Hindu worships Jesus Christ not because he is the only begotten son of God, in the orthodox sense, but because he recognises in Christ, a twin-soul with him in the path of his highest endeavour. And we have the testimony of the greatest religious saint of modern India, who realised the Christ-spirit as one with him, to adduce as the truth of our assertion. The historical fact of Christ-life even is not a bugbear to the Hindu mind. The fact is not unimportant because the idea is there, for that is his method of viewing the history, the history of the spiritual India.—This word *idea* again, in this context being also of a very broad and comprehensive significance, for it embraces both the highest as well as the next lower aspect of it. For it is not only the God-sense that speaks through an Incarnation but also in the visioning forth his transcendent consciousness, his explanation, very often unconscious to the popular mind, of the historical, the phenomenal, the *Vyavahārika*, surrounding of his life. Christ is the supreme explanation of the life in Palestine of his time and so were Buddha and Sri Chaitanya, Sankara and Rama-krishna Paramahansa.

He of whom we speak, though last, is not the least among this bright band of

India's greatest sages and God-men. The breadth of his spiritual culture and the depth of his consciousness of the Absolute so far surpasses the acquisitions of many another in other epochs of the history of India and not only that, in the history of the world in fact, that humanity is well-nigh astounded to find that he stands so far above the well-known categories of his thought and judgment. Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a Hindu and an Advaitist, nay, he was a Christian of Christians, a Mahometan of Mahometans, at once a Shakta and a Vaishnava, the Advaitist losing himself in the highest spiritual *Jnanam*, as well as the Bhakta, in raptures over the attributes of his Divine Master. Not only these again but he was perfectly at home, a *Siddha-purusha*, a past-master in many other forms of spiritual culture in vogue among the Hindus for generations past. And all this in the course of one short and single life of his. It has been very aptly said that in his life of fifty-one years he lived eight thousand years of the national spiritual life.

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Marvellous man! He it is who sums up in himself the keynote of the whole spiritual culture of the Hindu nation, past and present as also the future to a very great extent, and no denying that! The proofs of it are evident all about us to-day. He is the living synthesis of the great religions of the world, not in the way of a mere subtle intellectual statement thereof but in the surest and grandest way of living the life of them all. This poor, solitary, uneducated and even '*unmauncered*' man, born in a way-side village and employed as an ordinary priest, on a very shabby pittance, in the temple of an aristocrat—he, the poor, illiterate Brahmin, clad in the simplest and living in the

most '*squalid*' manner, speaking the tongue of the common village-folk, he, to work wonders and revolutionize altogether the history of human spiritual culture!—the most prodigious efforts of mental concentration that human eyes have ever been called upon to witness. And the fact lies there to-day, it lies on the knees not of the gods alone but of all men, of all countries. He that hath eyes to see let him see. He that hath ears to hear let him hear. The light of *sadhana* that was once lit on the bank of the Holy Ganges, in the temple of Dakshineswar, has now to be turned not only towards the homes of the Indians themselves but towards the west and the east, the north and the south, everywhere, so that all will bathe and partake of their share in the full floods of this superb Illumination. Swami Vivekananda, the mighty disciple of this mighty teacher, has made his Guru's name revered in the countries of the West to-day. The East has opened her doors and have we not seen the first batch of the new pilgrims ashore already? Do we not see them even now, while out, in the distance, the red war is stamping its feet and nations feeling the shock of it coming in wistfully to drink of this celestial fountain India's living inspiration?

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The life has been lived and the Word has been spoken, even more deeply than ever before. Where are they now, that shall testify to it, that shall speak of it, not in subdued whispers of dull and dubious thought but in words that shall sear and burn the materialistic conscience of our modern civilisation and bring back its lost self-consciousness home once more?



## SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

(BY A DEVOTEE.)

**O**all the soul-forces which have worked in human society for the uplift of man, none have been so potent and far-reaching in their effects than those which have come to us on the wings of love, peace and emotion. True, these forces are silent, imperceptible in their operations like the action of physical forces, such as the course of the planets in their orbits,—selfless, unwearied, poised in bliss, still they work powerful upheavals in human society and are perceived in their cumulative effects bridging over a long span of time. Such have been the effects of messages of love and emotion, such the work of the Evangel of Peace. Feeling, sentiment is all relegated to a subordinate, nay, inferior position in most modern schools of thought and is sought to be weeded out like a poisonous weed.

But is it necessary for the highest intellect to be incompatible with feeling? The life of Sri Ramakrishna offers a wonderful key to its solution and throws a flood of light upon it. Here was a life lived in which one sees the highest and boldest reasoning playing side by side with the tenderest emotion. Things are carried to the extremest conclusions to which they are capable, even though in the mind following in their wake, all cherished pre-conceptions have to be given up and all the old chords of the heart have to snap, all past associations have to go, all is relentlessly torn off by the sheer force of Vichára. When he wanted to demonstrate to himself that he was the Self, why should he be bound by Mágic relations, feel more nearly related to his worldly relations than to

others and thus accept by the mind the association of his body and birth, we have it in his life, that he used to regard them as dry deep wells in which he would fall and never be able to get out and that in their presence he used to feel choked for breath. Who had greater penetration and insight than he to see the working out of the One Lord in the diverse religions and sects and to discover the unity by which the manifold was threaded? Those who have lived with him in everyday life know and attest how he searched and sifted everything before acceptal, and everything was weighed before the conclusion was come to. There was nothing perfunctory and slipshod even in his little actions, but they were guided by a uniform standard. During the period of his Sadhana in the Vedanta, his mind was caught in the swing of his philosophic reasoning which enjoined renunciation of all phenomenal experience and rose to such a height of transcendentalism, that his biographer records, for six months he was immersed within its profound depths and lost all consciousness of the external.

Even after that period when the transcendental consciousness had become established in him and he had assumed the normal human Vyavaháric consciousness, the upward flow of his mind was so powerful, that any slight or remote suggestion was sufficient to precipitate it into the depths of Samadhi. This supereconscious mood was so insistent that in order to induce the normal human consciousness, he had to repeat with great deal of emphasis some ordinary human desire

like "I shall have this thing or that," grasping which his mind descended into the external consciousness. To one who has risen to such a height of abstraction, the ordinary values of life must necessarily be lost, and he will not feel the same interest in the persons and things of the world, or in causes which loom so large in our mental vision.

Then opens the most pleasing episode of his life, the days of his sweet ministry, the days of a thousand services of love, the days which cannot be recalled without a thrill of emotion. The little band of young men whom he had seen as chosen by his Divine Mother to come to him for his religious ministry had now gathered round him, and all that intense love and devotion he had felt before for the Mother Kali now welled up and flowed in a thousand streams to these his children of the spirit. Mother never felt for his son so deeply, nor friend for friend, none ever felt so sweetly for his beloved as he felt for them. His love was distilled from the love of all. All that the poets have painted in the highest flights to which the wings of their imagination would carry them, sinks into insignificance and pales into nothingness before the love of his relationship with his spiritual children. And what unfathomable purity! The very sight of some of them used to plunge him in Samadhi in nearness of God. As he used to say, "I see Narayana in them!" This he used to feel for all, and would go to any lengths to be of some service to people, even when every word he spoke meant agony to him. "I would give a thousand lives to be of service to one man," he exclaimed. Well might he, for in the crowning realisation of his life he was wont to say, "It is He who has become all this. Many years ago, Vaishnavacharan had said that when one believed in

Naralilá—realised the Lord playing as man; his knowledge had become perfect. Now I see it is true, every word of it."

This brings us round to the point from which we started, that head and heart must join in holy alliance and that intellect must be wedded to emotion. This is the wonderful religion of head and heart which Swami Vivekananda preached, and of which his master was the most perfect object-lesson: to realise the oneness, the solidarity of man which Vedanta declared ages ago and which science also is demonstrating to-day, and to love and worship and serve everything as manifestation of the One Lord of the Universe. Thus there will be room for an infinite development of intellect and an infinite development of feeling. This is the type of character of which the life of Sri Ramakrishna offers us the model to mould our lives upon. Not only is the joining of head and heart necessary, but imperative. For intellect without the chastening influence of feeling is a highly explosive individual and social ingredient and is apt to involve the man or social body in which it thrives in ruin. Intellect revolves on the pivot of "I" or the self and its tendency is to gather everything from everywhere round one centre, to foster that particular point at the expense of all others. A powerful intellect needs to be balanced by strong sympathies, otherwise it is apt to develop into a Superman or Social Anarch dominating over their fellowmen; for every bit of that power has been garnered for the glorification of the "I" and is now employed for self-aggrandisement, to satisfy the greed for gain or lust for power. The crash of ruin which is sounding in our ears in the world-war is due partly to that. Intellect has been cultivated, sciences have been discovered, the few have made

slaves of the many, and consequently there has been no expansion of heart, which has been confined within narrow limits, or allowed to run into little ruts.

The Indian Ideal has been one diametrically opposed to this. The poet Kalidasa in describing the character of the King Dilipa paints the type of manhood adored even in a Kshatriya in these words: "Even endowed with knowledge he was reticent, with the possession of power there was no abuse, in charity no self-advertisement, he had the pairs of opposite qualities in such exquisite balance, that

they appeared to be blossomed together. Verily has the Creator created him with noble elements; for all the endowments of his head and heart were for the good and welfare of others." There is abundance of power but all is held in perfect control, not under the sway of self; like a wide ocean with all its waters calmed, and not allowed to break into tumults or waves.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna with its rich endowment of the qualities of head and heart is thus the working out and embodiment of the characteristic Indian ideal.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MISSION TO THE WEST.

(By BRAHMACHARI GURUDAS.)

*(Concluded from page 67)*

**I**N the West renunciation was hardly even mentioned, much less practised. And the word had held little or no meaning to us, till we met the Swamis of the Rama-krishna Mission. In Swamiji's life and teaching renunciation was the great theme." "Hate this world," he said, "it is a mire. Cultivate love for the spiritual life." And he quoted: "Not by wealth, not by progeny, but by renunciation alone the goal is reached." "Stand up for God," he said, "let the world go. Have no compromise. Give up the world, then alone you will be free."

What a contrast with the teaching prevalent in the West at that time,—the teaching of health, wealth and prosperity, that sad aberration of the spiritual ideal that was gaining a footing in the West in those days! "God is good; we are His children; so let us enjoy the good things of this world," was the rising religion in America.

These false ideas the Swami had to correct. He had to root them out. And he did it

with a will. "You people in the West, have enjoyed enough," he said in California. "Now go to the jungle, dig a hole and meditate. Spit on this world, if you want God." And he took some of his students and they lived and camped in the woods. "Now," he said, "imagine that you are Yogis, living in the Indian forest. Forget your cities, forget everything. Think only of God. See," he said, pointing to a stream, flowing near by, "here is Mother Ganges." And they lighted the Dhuni and sat around it and he taught them how to meditate and to make Japam. And facing the stream he would shout: Hara, Hara, Vyom, Vyom! Hara, Hara, Vyom, Vyom! until that sound vibrated in every mind and the world was forgotten and the soul soared into regions unknown before.

And those of you who knew Swamiji, knew how charming was his personality, how full of fun and wit he was. To camp out with him was a constant delight to his disciples. What wealth of stories he would relate to them

during moonlight evenings, around the camp-fire, under the beautiful pine-trees of California. During these stories India would live before the mental eye of the students.

And so through hours of seriousness and through hours of innocent enjoyment, the students were drawn towards God. And in their hearts was lighted the fire of renunciation. It seemed all so easy, so joyous, so free from effort. But in later years the student realised what miracle had been wrought within their hearts.

There is a sect in America that teaches that because Jesus healed the sick, to use one's mental power for healing diseases is the true mission in life. And then came Swamiji and he told them the story of his own master, how during an illness one of his followers had suggested that he heal himself through his own mental efforts. The master had listened. But later he said : " How mean to take one's mind away from Mother to direct it towards this filthy body ? " And Swamiji concluded with the startling remark : " Jesus would have been greater, had he not used his powers."

To some of his hearers, especially to hide-bound church members, such remarks were shocking and "they understood not the sayings which he spoke unto them." But those who were really sincere, " kept all these sayings in their hearts." To these there was food for thought. And the very startling effect of the words helped them to lift their minds out of the old rut of thinking.

Swamiji was a man of many moods and to judge him by one of these moods, or by one single saying, was not doing him justice. Only those who were with him much could get a glimpse of his many-sided nature. For example, one day he placed Christ after Buddha in regard to greatness as a man. And some Christians did not like it. But had they had a little patience, they would have heard how on another occasion he said of Jesus that he was an Incarnation of God. " And these great Incarnations," he added, " are untouched

by aught of earth. They assume our form and our limitations for a time, in order to teach us. But in reality they are never limited, they are ever free."

I remember how one afternoon I came to the Vedanta Society in New York with a large picture of Jesus in my hand. The Swami asked me what I had there. I told him that it was a picture of Christ talking to the rich young man. " Oh, let me see it," he said, eagerly. I handed him the picture. And never shall I forget the tenderness in his look when he held the picture and looked at it. At last he returned it to me, with the simple words : " How great was Jesus ! " And I could not help thinking that there was something in common between these two souls.

The doctrine of sin and eternal hell-fire is one of the doctrines on which orthodox Christian preachers love to harp. Man is born in sin, his nature is sinful. It is only through the grace of God that man can be saved. Now, Swamiji used to hold question classes in New York. And every one was invited to ask any question he wished. So one evening, an old church-lady asked him why he never spoke of sin. There came a look of surprise on Swamiji's face. " But, madam," he said, " blessed are my sins. Through sin I have learned virtue. It is my sins, as much as my virtues that have made me what I am to-day. And now I am the preacher of virtue. Why do you dwell on the weak side of man's nature ? Don't you know that the greatest blackguard often has some virtue that is wanting in the saint ? There is only one power and that power manifest both as good and as evil. God and the devil are the same river with the water flowing in opposite directions."

The lady was horrified, but others understood. And then the Swami began to speak of the divinity that resides in every man ; how the soul is perfect, eternal and immortal ; the Atman resides in every being. And he

quoted from the Gita : " Him the sword cannot cut, Him the fire cannot burn, Him the water cannot wet, nor can the wind dry up the Atman. Eternal, all-pervading, immortal is the soul of man."

For you who are born in India, it must be difficult to realise what all this meant to us in the West,—to us, who had chased all our lives under the terrible doctrines of the church ; that man is an impotent, miserable creature, at the mercy of a whimsical, autocratic God,—the sword of damnation always hanging over one's head, bond-slaves at the mercy of a Potentate to save or damn as He pleases.

Then came the strength-giving words of the Upanishads : " Brahman alone is real ; everything else is unreal, and the human soul is that Brahman, not different from it." Here, was hope, here was strength, every man can become divine, by realising his own divinity. Do you see what an immense consolation Swamiji's teaching was to those who had searched but had not yet found, those who had knocked but unto whom it had not yet been opened ? To them, Swamiji came as a Saviour. He came to the door of their own hearts and knocked. And blessed are they who opened the door to receive the flow of benediction that came with his presence.

I will not attempt to tell you what Swamiji's mission was in other directions, what he has done for the land of his birth by waking up his own countrymen ; in presenting India to the world in her true garb ; in removing stupid and wrong impressions we in the West had about the Hindus ; in placing India where she belongs in the intellectual and spiritual world,—suffice it for me to give you my impressions of his mission in the West, as the bearer of light and wisdom, as the consoler of the heart, as the friend, the guide, the teacher of a nation groping in spiritual darkness.

Not long ago I was asked, by a friend of mine, to state in a few words what was the

mission of Swami Vivekananda. You know, people love to throw bombshells and see them explode. My friend was evidently expecting such an explosion. But I am afraid he was disappointed. In the first place, I do not believe in pigeonholing men like Swamiji. It is utter silliness to attempt and express his mission in one sentence. And then, in the second place, I was not prepared for the question. So, though the question acted somewhat like a bombshell on my brain, I must confess that the explosion was rather feeble. And my friend was evidently disappointed. I replied rather hesitatingly that Swamiji came to enlighten the world. "To enlighten the world ?" he said scornfully, "we have light enough. Swamiji came to make men." I could not deny it, for at once flashed through my mind Swamiji's own words : " My religion is a man-making religion."

Now I think that both these answers are typical, the one expressing the Swami's mission to the East, the other his mission to the West. Yes, my friend was right, you have light abundant here in India. Your scriptures are like the shining sun that dispels the darkness of ages. But remember, that sun was shining very dimly even in your own land, until Swamiji removed the intervening clouds. You had turned your back towards the light and you were looking at your own shadow. It was Swamiji who told you to turn around and face the light. Your gaze was directed Westward ; from the West you expected light and help and inspiration, until Swamiji made it clear to you that not by imitating Western life could India be raised, but by turning towards your own scriptures, by studying the culture of your own beloved motherland, you would become men.

And as my friend remarked that there is light enough in India, that India needed men, so I might have retorted, taking the Western viewpoint, that the West has plenty of men, that we needed light.

But are these the men that Swamiji wanted? Yes, muscles of iron and nerves of steel there may be. A good deal of brain even. Swamiji would not have told us that playing football we would be better able to understand the Gita. Strength there is, indomitable will-power, perseverance, courage, integrity. Who shall deny it? But was that all that Swamiji wanted of a man? Brute-force we find abundant in the West. But how is that force applied? Is it used as a medium to elevate us above the brute creation? Has it made us *real* men? That is the question.

Do we use that strength as a foundation on which to raise a noble, refined character, as a basis on which the higher, the moral, the spiritual man takes his stand? Swamiji wanted *men*, but not brutes. He wanted men, the highest product of evolution, man, the master of his lower nature, the king of creation.

And what did Swamiji mean by strength? "Strength, strength, I have only taught strength," he exclaimed when questioned about his work. But what kind of strength? Do you remember how he would repeat again and again Sri Krishna's admonition to Arjuna, when the latter in a moment of mental confusion, dropped bow and arrow and sank down in his chariot, overcome by grief? "Whence this weakness?" exclaims Lord Krishna. "At critical moments to fall back and shrink from one's duty is mean. It does not befit thee, Arjuna. Remember, you are an Aryan. Stand up and quit thee like a man."

Swamiji wanted that kind of strength, strength that leads to the conscientious performance of our Dharma, be it in social functions or in a life of withdrawal from worldly affairs. Renunciation must be the backbone of our life in the world, as well as in solitude. In the West we had enough of worldly activity. So in London Swamiji told his disciples: "What the world wants to-day, is twenty men and women, who can dare to stand in the street yonder and say that they possess

nothing but God! What the world wants, is character, men of burning, selfless love. Remember, man is the highest being that exists, *man is God*. But that man must be pure and strong and selfless and stripped of worldly ambitions."

"One great theme," so writes a friend to me from California, "one great theme was carried through all the Swami's teachings. And that was the necessity for spiritual self-reliance. 'Religion is for the strong!' he shouted again and again. 'Be brave, be strong, be fearless. Once you have taken up the spiritual life, fight as long as there is any life in you. Even though you know that you are going to be killed, fight till you *are* killed. Don't die of fright. *Die fighting*. Don't go down, till you are knocked down.'

"Then, with his right hand extended, he thundered: 'Die game! Die game! Die game!' These were his farewell words to his disciples in California, his goodbye."

That is what Swamiji wanted of his *men*. The demand was high, but he could not be satisfied with anything less.

Renunciation was Swamiji's badge. It is true, in the West he had often to accept a life of luxury. But his friends knew that his inner soul was always at the feet of his master; that to him he looked for inspiration, that from him he received the command.

This burning love for God and the Truth, his absolute selflessness, his love and sympathy for the high and the low alike, are what made Swamiji so dear to his Western disciples. They felt instinctively that it was his own heart that spoke, when he quoted an ancient Rishi: "Hear ye children of immortal bliss! Even ye, that dwell in higher spheres! For I have found that ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion. And knowing Him, ye also shall be saved from death."

And then Swamiji departed. He left for distant shores. But his voice seemed to linger behind. And in hours of solitude, when the heart felt sad and longed for one look, for one

word from the beloved, but departed master, that voice seemed to speak and whisper : "Go within ; all knowledge is there. Hearest thou not ? In thine own heart, day and night, is singing that Eternal music, Satchidananda, Sivoham, Sivoham."

And now, as we look back and reflect what heritage the Swami Vivekananda has left to the West, we would point first of all to those who were his disciples, those living monuments, chiselled by his own hands, men and women, always ready to testify to the debt they owe to their master ; we could point to the *men* and *women* he has made, men and women, ready to live and die for him. We would point to the lives he has changed, to those whom he has brought to the feet of his divine master. We would point to his brother Sannyasins now spreading his message in different parts of America.

And then we would point to that encyclopaedia of spiritual information, his lectures, which are now printed and widely circulated all over the world, scriptures through which his voice may still be heard, through which his spirit is still working, scriptures to which for ages to come, East and West alike, will look for light and guidance.

And lastly we would point to a quiet place of retreat in the sunny hills of California, the Shanti Ashrama, our first Ashrama in America. Swamiji did not go there himself, but he sent one of his beloved brother monks, to teach us how to live the life.

And now, if you ask what made the Swami Vivekananda so wonderfully successful in the West, we would answer that it was his eloquence, the logic of his arguments, his wonderful personality and his spotless life. It was the combination of heart and intellect that made Swamiji the power that he was.

His mission to the West, I take it, was to give to the Christians a higher interpretation of their own scriptures, to give to unbelievers a sound foundation for serious investigation, to guide the scientific mind into channels of higher research, to point out to Western nations the danger of a materialistic civilisation and to show to all men and women the way, how to realise their own divinity. And this he did by placing before us and by explaining to us, the treasures of the Vedas.

And in fulfilling this mission the Swami Vivekananda has placed all Western nations under eternal obligation to India.

### EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

CXXXIII.

(Original.)

20th May, 1894.

Dear —

I am in receipt of your letter and am glad to learn that S— is all right. Now I tell you a curious fact. Whenever any one of you is sick, let him himself or any one of you *visualise* him in your mind and mentally say and strongly imagine that he is all right. *That will cure him quick.* You can do it even without his knowledge and even with thousands of miles between. Remember it and do not be ill any more. \* \* \*

I cannot understand why — be so miserable on account of his daughter's marriage. After all he is going to drag his daughters through the dirty *Samsara* which *he* wants to escape !!! I can have but one opinion on that—condemnation ! I hate the very name of *marriage* either in a boy or a girl. Do you mean to say that I will have to help in getting some one in *bondage* ? If my brother M— marries I will throw him off from me. I am very decided about it.

So far so good bye for the present.

Yours V.

## CXXXIV.

(Original)

[Written to Rao Bahadur Narasimha Chariar.]

Chicago,  
23rd June, 1894.

Dear Sir,

Your kindness to me makes me venture to take a little advantage of it. Mrs. P. is the chief lady of the United States. She was the lady President of the World's Fair. She is much interested in raising the women of the world and is at the head of a big organisation for women. She is a particular friend of Lady Dufferin and has been entertained by the Royalties of Europe on account of her wealth and position. She has been very kind to me in this country. Now she is going to make a tour in China, Japan, Siam and India. Of course she will be entertained by the Governors and other high people in India. But she is particularly anxious to see our society apart from English official aid. I have on many occasions told her about your noble efforts in raising the Indian women, of your wonderful College in Mysore. I think it is our duty to show a little hospitality to such personages from America in return for their kindness to our countrymen who came here. I hope she will find a warm reception at your hands and be helped to see a little of our women as they are. And I assure you she is no missionary, nor Christian even as to that. She wants to work apart from all religions to ameliorate the condition of women all over the world. This would also be helping me a great deal in this country.

May the Lord bless you.

Yours for ever and ever

Affectionate

Vivekananda.

## CXXXV.

(Translated from Bengali.)

Baltimore, U. S. A.  
23rd October, 1891.

Dear—

Glad to receive your letter and go through the contents. I received to-day a letter of A— from London, which also gives me some information.

\* \* \* \*

Now you have come to know your own powers.—Strike the iron while it is hot. Idleness won't do. Throw overboard all idea of jealousy and egotism, once for all. Come on to the practical field with tremendous energy; to work, in the fulness of strength! As to the rest, the Lord will point out the way. The whole world will be deluged by a tidal wave. Work, work, work,—let this be your motto. I cannot see anything else. There is no end of work here—I am careering all over the country. Wherever the seed of his power will find its way, there it will fructify—*अथ वादशतान्ते वा*—be it to-day, or in a hundred years. You must work in sympathy with all, then only it will lead to quick results.

\* \* Our object is to do good to the world, and not the trumpeting of our own names. Why doesn't N— learn Pali, in Ceylon, and study Buddhist books? I cannot make out what good will come of aimless rambling. \* \* Those that have come under his protection, have Virtue, Wealth, Desires and Freedom lying at their feet. मामैः मामैः—courage! Everything will come about by degrees. From all of you I want this that you must discard for ever self-aggrandisement, faction-mongering and jealousy. You must be all-forbearing, like Mother Earth. If you can achieve this, the world will be at your feet.

\* \* Try to give less of material food in the anniversary celebrations, and give some food for the brain instead. \* \*

Vivekananda.

## VIVEKACHUDÁMANI

(Continued from page 69.)

अद्वाभक्तिध्यानयोगान्मुमुक्षो-  
मुक्तेद्वैतन्वक्ति साक्षाच्छ्रुतेर्गीः ।  
यो वा पतेष्वेव तिष्ठत्यमुष्य  
मोक्षोऽविद्याकलिपताद्वैहृष्टन्धात् ॥४६॥

46. Faith, devotion and the Yoga of meditation—these are mentioned by the Sruti as the immediate factors of Liberation in the case of a seeker; whoever abides in these, gets Liberation from the bondage of the body, which is the conjuring of Ignorance.

[The reference is to Kaivalya Upanishad i. 2.

*Faith*—Shraddhâ, *Devotion*—Bhakti. These have been defined in Slokas 25 and 31, 32.

*Bondage of the body*—i. e. the identification of the Self with the body, which is solely due to Ignorance or Avidyâ.]

अद्वानयोगात्परमात्मनस्त्व  
स्तुत्यात्मबन्धस्तत एव संसृतिः ।  
तयोर्विवेकोदितबोधवहि-  
रज्ञानकार्यं प्रदद्वेत्समूलम् ॥४७॥

47. It is verily through the touch of Ignorance that thou who art the Supreme Self, findest thyself under the bondage of non-Self, whence alone proceeds the round of births and deaths. The fire of knowledge, kindled by the discrimination between these two, burns up the effects of Ignorance together with their root.

रिष्य उवाच ।

कृपया श्रूतां स्वामिन्प्रश्नोऽयं क्रियते मया  
यदुत्तरमहं श्रूत्या कृतार्थः स्यां भवन्मुखात् ॥४८॥

48. The disciple said: Condescend to listen, O Master, to the question I am putting (to thee); I shall be gratified to hear a reply to the same from thy lips.

को नाम बन्धः कथमेष आगतः  
कथं प्रतिष्ठास्य कथं विमोक्षः ।  
कोऽसावनात्मा परमः क आत्मा  
तयोर्विवेकः कथमेतदुच्यताम् ॥४९॥

49. What is Bondage, forsooth? How has it come (upon the Self)? How does it continue to exist? How is one freed from it? Who is this non-Self? And who is the Supreme Self? And how can one discriminate between them?—Do tell me about all these.

श्रीगुरुरुद्वाच ।

धन्योऽसि कृतकृत्योऽसि पावितं ते कुलं त्वया ।  
यदविद्यावन्धमुक्त्या ब्रह्मभवितुमिच्छसि ॥५०॥

50. The Guru replied: Blessed art thou! Thou hast achieved thy life's end and hast sanctified thy family, that thou wishest to attain Brahmanhood by getting free from the bondage of Ignorance!

ऋणमोचनकर्तारः पितुः सन्ति सुतादयः ।  
बन्धमोचनकर्ता तु स्वस्पादन्यो न कञ्चन ॥५१॥

51. A father has got his sons and others to free him from his debts, but he has got none but himself to remove his bondage.

[In this and the next few Slokas the necessity of direct realisation is emphasised as the only means of removing Ignorance.]

मस्तकन्यस्तभारादेर्दुःखमन्यैनिवार्यते ।  
शुभादिकृतदुःखं तु विना स्वेन न केनचित् ॥५२॥

52. The trouble such as that caused by a load on the head can be removed by others, but none but one's own self can put a stop to the pain which is caused by hunger and the like.

पथ्यमौषधसेवा च कियते येन रोगिणा ।  
आरोग्यसिद्धिर्दृष्टास्य नान्यानुष्ठितकर्मणा ॥५३॥

53. The patient who takes (the proper) diet and medicine is alone seen to recover completely,—not through work done by others.

वस्तुस्वरूपं स्फुटबोधचक्षुषा ।  
स्वेनैव वेद्यं न तु परिणेतेन ।  
चन्द्रस्वरूपं निजचक्षुषैव ।  
ज्ञातव्यमन्यैरवगस्यते किम् ॥५४॥

54. The true nature of things is to be known *personally*, through the eye of clear illumination, and not through a sage:

what the moon exactly is, is to be known with one's own eyes; can others make him know it?

अविद्याकामर्मादिपाशबन्धं विमोचितुम् ।

कः शक्तुयाद्विनात्मानं कल्पकोटियतैरपि ॥५५॥

55. Who but one's own self can get rid of the bondage caused by the fetters of Ignorance, desire, action and the like, aye, even in a hundred crore of cycles?

[Ignorance of our real nature as the blissful Self leads to desire, which in its turn impels us to action, entailing countless sufferings.

*Cycle*—Kalpa, the entire duration of the evolved universe. See note on Sloka 6.]

(To be continued.)

## THE EIGHTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

### At the Belur Math.

The eighty-third birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva came off on the 14th March last, when seven members of the Math were formally initiated into Sannyasa and two others into Brahmacharya. About 500 people were assembled on that day and were sumptuously fed. The public celebration took place on the 17th instant, when as usual, three steamships of Messrs. Hoare Miller & Co. plied between the Ahiritola Ghat and the Math. A big portrait of Sri Ramakrishna was installed under a huge canopy, on the Math ground, duly set between a very artistic arrangement of flowers, creepers etc. There were also the usual decorations all about the Math premises. There were distributions of Prasada, and cold drinks on a vast scale, and the men in charge, the volunteers and others were all attention to the guests of the day. The vast congregation amounted to nearly 50,000 people, of whom about 15,000 partook of the Prasada. There were songs, 'Kali-kirtan,' fire-works and many such other interesting items in the programme of the day. Concert and Sankirtan parties of the locality as well as from the metropolis had gathered in groups to pay their respects to the memory of Bhagavan Ramakrishna Deva.

### At Ranchi.

The 83rd birthday anniversary was celebrated at Hinu on the 21st March, 1918, with the following programme :—

Sankirtan—6 p. m. to 8 p. m. (30th March).

Next day :— 1. Sankirtan in the morning. 2. Puja and Aratrika—at noon. 3. Distribution of Prasada—12 a. m. to 3 p. m. 4. Reading of Essays and Discourses on Religious subjects—4-6 p. m. 5. Kalikirtan—6-7 p. m.

### At Sylhet.

The 83rd birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with great pomp under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Seva Samiti. A public meeting presided over by the District Judge, Mr. H. C. Liddell, i. c. s. was held on the 11th March in the Town Hall, which was attended by the *elite* of the town, including officials. The reading of the annual report of the Samiti was followed by lectures on social service, and on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. The President exhorted the audience to join the Samiti and wished it all success. On the 14th the Bhaktas performed the Tithi Puja. The public celebration came off on the 17th. There was Kirtan all through the day. In the morning the patients of the leper asylum were served with sweets under the direction

of the medical officer. In the evening about one thousand people including sweepers and other untouchables were fed.

#### At Benares.

The 83rd birthday was celebrated at the Rk. Advaita Ashrama on the 17th March when the following programme was observed :—

1. The feeding of Sadhus, at noon.
2. Sankirtan, 2-4 p. m.
3. A lecture in Hindi on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, by Babu Kali Prasanna Chatterji, late Editor, Tribune, 4-5 p. m.
4. Kali-kirtan with music, in the evening.
5. Distribution of Prasada among the assembled gentry, about 800 in number.

The *tithi-puja* had been performed on the 14th March with the usual ceremonies and entertainment of Bhaktas.

#### At Kankhal.

The 83rd birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated by the Rk. Sevashrama on 17th March. The programme was as follows :—

1. Music by Sm. Satyabala Devi 9-11 a. m.
2. Lecture on the Life and Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa by Pandit Yogindra Chandra Sarma, Sankhya-Vedanta-tirtha, 11-12 p. m.
3. Serving Sadhu-Mahatmas with food, 12 a. m. to 2 p. m.
4. Bhajana 2-4 p. m.

#### At Kishenpur, Dehra Dun.

The 83rd birthday anniversary was celebrated on 17th March, at the Ramakrishna Ashrama. Many distinguished gentlemen from Dehra Dun attended the festival. After Puja and Bhajana there were religious discourses by Babu Buldeo Singh, Rai Saheb Ishan Ch. Dev, Mr. Chandi Prasad, M.A. B.L. and others. Prasada was distributed among the assembled Bhaktas, nearly a thousand in number.

#### At Lucknow.

The 83rd birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Rk. Sevashrama, Lucknow (18 Hewett Road), on the 17th March, 1918. There was Nagar Sankirtan in the morning, which was followed by the feeding of some 1100 poor and infirm people. At about 6 p. m. under the presidency of the Hon'ble Pandit Gokaran Nath Misra, President of the Sevashrama, the general meeting was commenced with a prayer recited by the boys of the depressed class school attached to the Ashrama, after which songs were sung and the annual report was read. The president then distributed prizes to the deserving students of the

depressed class school. After some formal business, Mr. A. P. Sen, Bar-at-Law delivered a nice speech in Bengali on "Sevadharma." The president then in an eloquent speech in Hindi explained the meaning of the word "Seva" and the necessity of establishing institutions like the present one which was named after the great Maharshi, Sri Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Deva, whose life was an inspiration to all his followers.

#### At Madras.

The 83rd birthday of Bhagavan Ramakrishna was celebrated on March 17, at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, with great eclat. There was Bhajana in the morning and a large number of poor people were fed in the course of the day. In the afternoon a Harikatha was performed by Mr. Thathachariar B. A., of the Secretariat, who kept the enlightened audience spell-bound.

A public meeting was held at 5-30 p. m., when Mr. B. V. Kameswara Iyer of Puducota read a very interesting paper on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Professor K. Sundararama Iyer presided. The learned lecturer spoke as follows :

Sri Ramakrishna was born of poor Brahman parents in a small village in Bengal, the youngest child of a family of three sons and two daughters. In his early years he picked up the elements of Puranas and Itihasas from strolling players who visited the village now and then. In 1853 a wealthy lady of Calcutta built a very fine temple on the banks of the Ganges at Dakshinesvar, about 4 miles to the north of Calcutta, the most important shrine in the temple being dedicated to Kali. The eldest brother of Sri Ramakrishna was appointed as the priest. A few months afterwards he fell ill and he requested Ramakrishna to take charge of the temple duties. For four or five years he continued as the Pujaka in the temple. Soon after he was temple priest, he became strange in his ways. After the regular forms of worship he would sit before the Kali for hours at a time singing praises to Her or talking to Her as if She were a living person. Sometimes he would weep for hours. The strange ways become more and more marked as days rolled on. Some thought that he was growing mad and others that he was turning out a true lover of God. His people thought that if he married and settled as a householder his madness would cease. He was taken to his native village and was wedded to a young girl. He

came back to Dakshinesvar and resumed his duties as temple priest. Instead of calming down he became more vagarious. Thenceforward he lived most of his life in the temple precincts roaming about and meditating. It was given out that his madness was the madness after God. His wife came to him some years later and finding that his thoughts were not earthly she likewise resolved to lead a life of celibacy, attending on him as her Guru. In 1875 Keshab Chandra Sen visited him and struck by his remarkable spiritual insight wrote a short account of him and his teaching. In 1879 Pratap Chandra Mozumdar wrote an account of Ramakrishna in the 'Theistic Quarterly Review.' Many became his disciples, the most noted among them being Narendra, the famous Vivekananda. Here in all this one found no notable achievement of any kind. An unlettered man living most of his life in the seclusion of a garden with no heroic exploits to chronicle or brilliant incidents to set off the even tenour of his life, neither a writer nor an orator, neither an erudite philosopher nor a preacher nor a statesman. What was there in him that had made his name famous throughout the civilised world? Did he work miracles? No. He often said, "Visit not the miracle mongers for they are stragglers from Truth." It was not the masses that accepted him as a Saint and an Avatar. It was the educated Bengalees who had drunk deep of Western thought and culture and who quoted Mill and Spencer. P. C. Mozumdar said of him, "He did not know a word of Sanskrit and it is doubtful whether he knew enough Bengali. . . . He never writes anything, seldom argues, he never attempts to instruct."

What then is the secret of such enchanting influence? His personality was inspiring. The purity of his thoughts and relations towards women was unique. It appeared that he was born superior to earthly temptations. His body shrank instinctively from the touch of coins. Sri Ramakrishna was simple as a child and often sang, "The fool sayeth to his heart he has done this, he has done that; he knows not that it is the Lord that has used him as an instrument for His mighty purposes." Ramakrishna's sayings were not systematised: they were thrown out on the impulse of the moment. Pratap Chandra Mozumdar wrote, "He unconsciously throws a flood of marvellous light upon the obscurest passages of the Puranic

Shastras and brings out the fundamental principles of the popular Hindu faith with a philosophical clearness which contrasts itself with his simple and illiterate life. . . . If all his observations on men and things could be reproduced people might think that the days of prophecy, of primeval unlearned wisdom had returned."

The central note of his teachings was, "Let each man seek God after his own fashion." Ramakrishna's own particular leaning was towards the manifestation of Godhead as the Divine Mother. The one thing he insisted on was that every man should try and learn to love God. All aspects of God were useful, each according to the mental outfit of the aspirant to whom it appealed.

When the materialism of the 19th century Europe had come into this ancient land in the wake of Western Education, when the brilliancy of Western agnostic expositions and scientific achievements was dazzling the minds of Indian youths at the Universities, when the iconoclasm of Protestant Christianity, creeping into the life of the English educated Indians side by side with the ideas of Western thought and culture, was sapping the springs of national faith and threatening the extinction of the ancient rituals and observances as fetishes of a creed outworn, there was a need for a great soul to bear witness to the efficacy of old beliefs and practices to show to eyes that could see and brains that could think that out of the orthodox methods, out of even what was condemned as idolatry there could spring a soul that could reach through these very methods the highest condition of spiritual advancement that was possible for a man to reach on earth. And that soul was Sri Ramakrishna, born where the scepticism of the West was thickest and where had gathered the greatest scholars and writers of the land and the most eloquent preachers of new creeds.

The Chairman then gave a learned lecture on the bearings of Sri Ramakrishna's life on India's physical environments, race and Time-spirit.

The proceedings came to a close at about 8 p.m. with the distribution of Prasada.

#### At Bangalore.

The 83rd birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Rk. Ashrama, Basavangudi, Bangalore City, on 17th March, 1918.

Programme:—1. Arrival of Bhajana processions from the City and Cantonment at noon. 2. Bhajana

noon to 2 p. m. 3. Harikatha 2 to 5 p. m. 4. Lecture by Mr. V. C. Seshachariar, B. A. B. L., Vakil, High Court, Madras, on "Sri Ramakrishna's Religious Message to the World," in English and by Mr. A. R. Krishna Sastri B. A., Lecturer, Central College, Bangalore, on "Sri Ramakrishna, the Guru," in Kannada. 5. Mangalarati and distribution of Prasada.

#### At Nellore.

The birthday festival of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on the 3rd March under the auspices of Sri Saraswati Samajam, Mulapet, Nellore. Swami Sharvanandaji of the Madras Rk. Mission was invited on the occasion. Sri Ramakrishna's portrait was taken in procession through the streets amid joyous shouts, after which a Telugu paper was read on Sri Ramakrishna's Life and Teachings and Puja was performed and Prasada distributed among the Bhaktas. At 5-30 p. m. a public meeting was held at the Town Hall presided over by Mr. Sundaram Chettiar Avl. B. A. B. L., Sub Judge of Nellore, in which Swami Sharvanandaji charmed the audience with his interesting lecture on the Significance of Sri Ramakrishna's Life. Then the Chairman gave a short concluding address.

#### At Cuddapah.

The members of Sri Ramakrishna Samaj celebrated the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna on the 14th March. A public meeting was held at 6 p. m. when Mr. S. Ramakrishnaiya, the Joint Secretary of the Samaj, read a paper on "Sri Ramakrishna, the Ideal of Modern India," in which he eulogised the ideal of Brahmacharya and pointed out other prominent characteristics of the Paramahamsa, such as, sincerity, perseverance, ideal of service, and religious toleration and called on the younger generation to practise these virtues in life. The lecture was followed by Bhajana and distribution of Prasada.

The 83rd Birthday of the Bhagavan was also duly celebrated at the Rk. Sevashramas at Brindaban and Allahabad, at the Rk. Ashrama, Sargachi (Murshidabad), at the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, at the Rk. Mission, Dacca Branch, at the Rk. Archanalaya, Entally, Calcutta, and at other places by his followers and admirers.

#### NEWS AND NOTES.

We heartily welcome the publication of the neat little volume of Chicago Addresses of the Swami Vivekananda, translated into Hindi—addresses that first introduced the 'Cyclonic Hindu' to the modern civilised world. The Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Luxa, Benares City has done a service to the Hindi-speaking public by bringing out this highly popular work of Swamiji. The book is priced at 4 as., and can be had at the above address. We wish the book a wide circulation.

THE 56th birthday of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on Feb. 10 at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, with great eclat. In the morning after the usual Bhajana and Puja several Brahmins and non-Brahmins were fed at the Math besides a number of poor people at the Mylapore market. In the afternoon a Kalakshepam was performed and the public meeting came off at 5-30 in the evening, which was presided over by Dewan Bahadur M. O. Parthasarathy Aiyangar.

Mr. A. Krishnaswami Aiyar delivered an interesting and instructive lecture on "Swami Vivekananda and Modern India." He said in the course of his lecture :

There are three notes in the life and teachings of Swamiji which appeal to us more than any others. First, each nation has a destiny to fulfil, a message to deliver, a mission to accomplish. The glorious destiny of India is to regenerate man the brute into man the God. India has to spread the gospel of real strength and the gospel of renunciation enunciated in the Upanishads.

The second note in his teaching is the essential unity of the Hindu Religion. If the question is put to us wherein lies the unity of Hinduism, the answer is furnished by the Swamiji in this way, "All Hindus believe the Vedas to be the eternal teachings of the secrets of religion. All Hindus believe in a marvellous infinite power as the source of human energy. Unlike the other races of the world, we believe in a continuous evolution. Lastly, we all hold in India that the soul is by its nature pure and perfect and infinite in power and blessed."

The third note in the teaching of the Swamiji is

that religion is not a mere matter for the recluse. Religion ought to be dynamic, not statical, it ought to be positive and not negative.

No one was more righteously indignant than the Swamiji at the lot of our poor fellow countrymen. The Swamiji's wrath knew no bounds when he thought of this—that the poor Pariah is not allowed to go through the same street as the high caste man. But if he changed his name to an English one it was all right. "How to elevate the masses?" says he. "It is by education and education alone." Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brains and runs riot there undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. We must have the whole education of our country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands. It must be on national lines through national methods as far as it is practicable.

The Swamiji could not contemplate the possibility of the development of Indian manhood without the co-operation of Indian womanhood. He always appealed to the idea of a glorious mother. He always referred to India more as the India of Sita, Savitri and Damayanti than as the India of Sri Ramachandra, of Manu and Mandhata. He would send out Indian women for the spiritual conquest of England and America.

The Chairman, in his remarks observed that according to the teachings of the Swamiji, there must be a spirit of Vedantism pervading all our life, and it was only by the spirit of renunciation, a man would attain the highest nobility of the soul. Mr. C. P. RamaSwamy Aiyar proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer and the Chairman.

In connection with the fifty-sixth Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, an interesting lecture was delivered in the Mandayam Association, Mysore, by Mr. R. Sadasiva Iyer, M. A., Tutor, University of Mysore, on "The Place of Swami Vivekananda in the Modern Indian Renaissance," Sunday, the 10th Feb. Dr. Radhakumud Mookerjee, M. A., Ph. D., P. R. S., Professor, University of Mysore, presided on the occasion. The lecturer spoke as follows:—

We are now at the dawn of a new awakening in India. Swami Vivekananda's life touches different

sides of modern life. He was a born educator who dreamt of an ideal national university representing Eastern and Western culture and breathing the spirit of the old Gurukula; and he proclaimed also the vital necessity of mass education in our national life. But education was only one of the sides of social reform that he advocated. His great cry was 'bread before metaphysics,' and in his Ramakrishna Math—the home of Sannyasins and the temple of learning, he instituted the great feeding hall of the poor. His ardent interest in social reform was only the active expression of the patriot soul in him that made him dwell fondly on India's historical memories and natural scenery in all his wanderings in the West. From the sage's point of view, patriotism may be regarded as a mark of immaturity. The Swami had the celestial weakness of patriotism, partly because he believed that every nation must preserve its individuality so that the world might show a mosaic of nationalities, each with its characteristic life-design. India had her own distinctive gift to offer to the world and Vivekananda felt himself as its custodian and dispenser to the West. But no less strong in him was the universal human note he struck in his teaching. He was a true citizen of the world. As a religious teacher he synthesised the different schools of Indian philosophy, showed their unity and interpreted them on a rational basis. He laid emphasis on social action as well as inner realisations. For him all this was but the training for the Hindu Missionary movement in India and abroad. He wanted to nerve the spirit of Hinduism and make it aggressive enough to capture the heart of the West to the philosophy of the East. Indeed his greatest mission was to combine the best spirit of the West with that of the East, and so he insisted on strength and manliness as the supreme need of our national life. He was the first to preach the modern ethics of doing and suffering; and he showed that the soul should be realised through flesh and nature and not by crushing them, which was the burden of Browning's teaching. Vivekananda's mission in India was two-fold like Buddha's, whose gospel roused the arts, philosophy and literature of China and Japan, while it democratised the Aryan culture throughout the land. The Swami extended further the mission of Buddha by introducing Indian

philosophy into Western countries, and quickening the spirituality of his own land. He indeed comes in the wake of the great saints, Sankara and Ramanuja, who wanted us to extend the hand of brotherhood to the lowest Pariah. The memories of the sages and saints of a land are its priceless treasures, the epitome of all that is best and noblest in the land. "Great men are the fire-pillars in the dark pilgrimage of mankind : they are the heavenly signs, ever living witnesses of what has been, prophetic tokens of what may still be, the revealed, embodied possibilities of human nature," and it behoves us all who stand at the threshold of a great movement to cherish the memory of one of India's greatest saints and patriots, Swami Vivekananda whose spirit is in the hall to-day and awakens us to a new vision of life.

The President, amid loud applause, spoke to the following effect :—

The authorities of the Association have done well in celebrating the birthday of the Swami rather than the day of his passing to rest. For the great Swami is not dead but still lives in the hearts of his innumerable disciples and admirers. He has fulfilled the law of the mission of great men to the world. History demonstrates that whenever the world passes through a crisis the great man appears on the scene, and by his life and message guides the world forward in the path of progress. Sri Ramachandra, Buddha, Christ and Mahomet have all appeared in connection with some critical epoch in the history of mankind. Just in the same way, in the history of modern India, when Bengal was on the point of being denationalised and materialistic, there came to the rescue of Hinduism a great Avatar, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Ramakrishna who was in need of an instrument for the adequate fulfilment of his mission found one admirably suited to his purpose in young Narendra, who was at the time an ordinary graduate of the Calcutta University. Narendra, who in general resembled the normal graduate of his time, was yet distinguished in this—that instead of remaining satisfied with the transient pleasures of the physical life, he was yearning to realise the inner life culminating in Samadhi. No better proof of his fitness for the task of his life can be found than the choice he made when he was faced by two such alternatives as the call of

his master to the life of the spirit on the one hand and on the other, the inclination to remain at home to protect his starving mother. The main element of the great Swami's teaching is the emphasis he laid on the cultivation of what may be called the 'double life' in every man—the inner spiritual life and the outer physical life which it is impossible to avoid. These two aspects of life, though appearing antagonistic, are in reality complementary. No man should be content with the cultivation of only the physical life for it would mean our extinction with the extinction of the body. It is only the soul that is eternal and only the life of the soul can make us immortal. What is wanted for this is not the neglect but a proper control of the physical life, which will then serve as a means for the development of the spiritual life by the dedication of our external activities to the service of our fellow beings.

UNDER the auspices of the Theosophical Society, Srinagar, the 56th birthday anniversary of Sri Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at Sathu, Srinagar on the 3rd February, 1918. Under the presidency of Dr. Balwant Singh, I. M. S., a meeting was held, in which Pandit Sreekanth Toshikhana and Pandit Shanker Kaul read their papers in English on "Swami Vivekananda—the Man and his Message," and Pandit Jialal Kaul a paper in Urdu on "The Life-sketch of Swami Vivekananda" which was much appreciated. Professor Nityananda Shastri said that Swami Vivekananda had a mind to start a Sevashrama and a Sanskrit College in Kashmir. The meeting terminated with the distribution of Prasada. The feeding of children was a noticeable feature of the occasion.

THE birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Chaitanya and Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated by the residents of Kushtia (Nadia Dt.) on the 27th March, 1918. There was Nagar-kirtan in the morning. At noon, food was offered to the Lord and the assembled Bhaktas and poor Narayanas were served with the Prasada. Bhajan and religious discourse took place in the afternoon which were followed by Arati and the chanting of hymns and Sankirtan in the evening.

# Prabuddha Bharata

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# Prabuddha Bharata

प्रतिष्ठित जाप्रत



प्राण्य वरामिदावत !

Katha Upanishad, I, iii, 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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## CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

(XIV.—Continued)

[ Subject : Sankara's want of liberality.—The causes of the downfall of Buddhism.—Holy influence of places of pilgrimage.—Meaning of the Sloka : ' Seeing the Vamana on the ear ' &c.—Worship of God in His absolute aspect. ]

Thus the talk went on on various subjects and drifted to the topic of Sankaracharya. The disciple was a great adherent of Sankara, so much so that he might even be called a fanatic in this respect. He used to look upon Sankara's Advaita philosophy as the crest of all philosophies, and would be cut to the quick if any one took exception to any pronouncement of Sankara. Swamiji was aware of this and could not bear to see anybody growing crazy over any particular system of doctrines. Whenever he came across fanaticism in anything he would take the opponent's view and by dealing innumerable blows of infallible arguments would batter the narrow bounds of bigotry to pieces.

Swamiji.—Sankara's intellect was sharp like the razor;—he was a good argumentator and a scholar, no doubt of that, but he had no great liberality; his

heart too seems to have been like that. Besides, he used to take great pride in his Brahminism—much like a southern Brahmin of the priest class, you may say. How he has defended in his Commentary on the Vedanta-Sutras that the non-Brahmin castes will not attain to a supreme knowledge of Brahman! And how specious arguments! Referring to Vidura\* he has said, that he (Vidura) had become a knower of Brahman by reason of his Brahmin body in the previous incarnation. Well, if now-a-days any Sudra attains to a knowledge of Brahman, shall we have to side with your Sankara and maintain that because he had been a Brahmin in his previous birth, therefore he has attained to this knowledge? Goodness! What is the

\*Uncle of the Pandava brothers, and a most saintly character, considered to be an incarnation of Dharma.

use of dragging in Brahminism with so much ado? The Vedas have entitled anyone belonging to the three upper castes to a study of the Vedas and the realisation of Brahman, haven't they? So Sankara had no need whatsoever of displaying this curious bit of pedantry on this subject, contrary to the Vedas. And such was his heart that he burnt to death lots of Buddhist monks—by defeating them in argument! And the Buddhists, too, were foolish enough to burn themselves to death, simply because they were worsted in argument! What can you call such an action on Sankara's part except fanaticism? But look at Buddha's heart!—Ever ready to give his own life to save the life of a kid,—what to speak of बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय—'for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many'! See, what a liberality—what a compassion!

Disciple.— Can't we call that attitude of Buddha, too, as another kind of fanaticism, Sir! He went the length of sacrificing his own body for the sake of an animal!

Swamiji.— But consider how much good to the world and its beings came out of that 'fanaticism' of his,—how many monasteries and schools and colleges, how many public hospitals, and veterinary refuges were established, how developed architecture became,—think of that. What was there in this country before Buddha's advent?—only a number of religious principles recorded on bundles of palm leaves—and those too known only to a few. It was Lord Buddha who brought them down to the practical field, and showed how to apply them in the everyday life of the people. In a sense, *he was the living embodiment of true Vedanta.*

Disciple.— But, Sir, it was he who by breaking down the Varnashrama Dharma (duty according to caste and order of life)

brought about a revolution within the fold of Hinduism in India, and there seems to be some truth also in the remark that the religion he preached had been for this reason banished from the soil of India in course of time.

Swamiji.— It was not through his teachings that Buddhism came to such degradation, it was the fault of his followers. By becoming too philosophic they lost much of their breadth of heart. Then gradually the corruption known as Vámáchára (unrestrained mixing with women in the name of religion) crept in and ruined Buddhism. Such diabolical rites are not to be met with in any modern Tantra! One of the principal centres of Buddhism was Jagannath or Puri, and you have simply to go there and look at the abominable figures carved on the temple-walls there to be convinced of this. Puri has come under the sway of the Vaishnavas since the time of Ramanuja and Sri Chaitanya. Through the influence of those great personages the place now wears an altogether different aspect.

Disciple.— Sir, the Shastras tell us of various special influences attaching to places of pilgrimage. How far is this claim true?

Swamiji.— When the whole world is the Form Universal of the Eternal Atman, the Isvara, what is there to wonder at in special influences attaching to particular places? There are places where He manifests Himself specially, either spontaneously or through the earnest longing of pure souls, and the ordinary man, if he frequents those places with eagerness, attains their end quite easily. Therefore it may lead to the development of the Self in time to have recourse to holy places. But know it for certain that there is no greater Tirtha (holy spot) than the body of man. Nowhere else is the Atman so manifest as

He is here. That car of Jagannatha that you see is but a concrete emblem of this corporeal car. Haven't you read—आत्मानं रथं विद्धि—“Know the Atman to be the owner of the chariot” etc., मध्ये वामनमासीनं विभूत्वा उपासते—“All the gods worship the Vámana (the Supreme Being in a diminutive form) seated in the interior of the body”? The sight of the Atman is the real vision of Jagannatha. And the statement —रथं च वामनं दृष्ट्वा पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते—“Seeing the Vámana on the car one is no more subject to rebirth,” means this that if you can visualise the Atman who is within you, and disregarding whom you are always identifying yourself with this curious mass of matter, this body of yours,—if you can see Him, then there is no more rebirth for you. If the sight of the Lord's image on a wooden framework would confer liberation on people, then crores of beings would be liberated every year,—specially when there is so much facility of going by rail now-a-days. But I do not mean to say that the notion which devotees in general entertain towards Sri Jagannatha is either nothing or erroneous. There is a class of people who gradually rise to higher and higher truths with the help of that Image. So it goes without saying that in and through that Image there is a special manifestation of the Lord.

Disciple.— Sir, have they got different religions then,—the ignorant and the wise?

Swamiji.— Quite so. Otherwise why do your Scriptures go to such lengths over the specification of the qualifications of an inquirer? All is truth no doubt, but relative truth, different in degrees. Whatever man knows to be truth is of a like nature, some are lesser truths, others higher ones in comparison to them, while the Absolute Truth is God alone. This Atman is altogether dormant in matter,

in man, designated as a living being, He is partially conscious, while in personages like Sri Krishna, Buddha, Sankara the same Atman has reached the superconscious stage. There is a state even beyond that, which cannot be expressed in terms of thought or language—‘अवाइनसो गोचरम्’।

Disciple.— Sir, there are certain Bhakti sects who hold that we must practise devotion by placing ourselves in a particular attitude or relation with God. They do not understand anything about the glory of the Atman and all that, and even if they are told about it, they advise us to leave it all aside and develop a constant devotional attitude towards the Lord.

Swamiji.— What they say is true to their own case. By repeated practice along this line they too shall feel an awakening of Brahman within them. And what we (Sannyasins) are doing is another kind of practice. We have renounced the world. So how will it suit us to practise by putting ourselves in some worldly relation—such as that of mother, or father, or wife, or son and so forth—with God? To us all these appear to be narrow. Of course it is very difficult to qualify oneself for the worship of God in His absolute, unconditioned aspect. But must we go in for poison because we get no nectar? Always talk and hear and reason about this Atman. By continuing to practise in this way, you will find in time that the Lion (Brahman) will wake up in you too. Go beyond all those relative attitudes—mere sports of the mind. Listen to what Yama says in the Katha Upanishad—

उत्तिष्ठत जाप्रत प्राप्य वरात्रिवोधत ।

—Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached!

Here the subject was brought to a close. The bell for taking Prasada rang and the disciple followed Swamiji who went to partake of it.

## OCCASIONAL NOTES.

**I**NDIA is pre-eminently a religious country. Religion is its very life, without which she cannot exist a moment. This is true of her for all time, past, present and future. This is the reason why India has been living to-day notwithstanding thousands of vicissitudes in her political and social life. Look into her ancient scriptures, the Vedas and the Puranas, and you will find that she has paid the greatest attention to the development of her religious life, and the result has been that nowhere else on earth can one find scriptures that can cope in point of depth and variety with those of India. Standing on the vantage-ground of her ancient civilisation India is still a force in the modern world, though the fact may not be patent to all. She may not be universally recognised as such by the present-day world, but he that has eyes will be able to satisfy himself that despite the want of recognition India is still the wonderful land of light and wisdom, of culture and spirituality.

The westernised man of superficial thought will smile in derision at such pronouncements. Well may he, for he is the product of a materialistic civilisation, and must be what his Western teachers have made him. Inspite of his boasted superiority of vision, he is but a creature of convention, following what Bacon calls 'the idol of the marketplace.' His mind is accustomed to travel in the ruts of *L. s. d.*, and his sole criterion of measuring the values of things is the amount of creature-comforts the subject in question may bring. He may point out that the West does

not merely look to the comforts of the body, it has advanced intellectual culture, too. But there it ends. There are certain traits which are inherent in particular individuals and they have been so inveterate, so much mixed up with the flesh and blood of that individual that he cannot get rid of them by any means. They have become a part and parcel of his life. And materialism is such a characteristic with the Westerner. However refined he may pose to be, however much he may try to soar beyond materiality, it still lingers in him. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, a garlic pot will smell however much you may wash it. The Westerner forgets that seeking intellectual satisfaction is a subtle kind of pleasure-seeking, and the Indian, accustomed to thinking of the mind as subtle matter, can easily detect it under its veneer of apparent sanctimony.

The Western mind can never cross this intellectual barrier. To him intellect is the highest pinnacle to which man can ascend, and he will not give it up or dethrone it from its high pedestal even though he may see that there are things in heaven and earth which baffle all attempts of the intellect to grapple with. He will still be a votary of Reason, apotheosising it, though the Deity be altogether impotent to take him beyond the miseries of life. So the Westerner will weigh India also in his intellectual balance and, no wonder, will declare her as found wanting. Let it be. Those that are real truth-seekers know that intellect is not the supreme court of authority, that there is a higher and more efficient means of testing

our knowledge, and will look with equanimity, if not scorn, upon the oracular verdict of the Westernised man.

What is this higher criterion of truth?—it may naturally be asked. It is competent testimony—the evidence of inspired persons. Just as tactuo-muscular perception is the surest proof of the external world, so in the case of the supra-natural world, the realm of spirituality, the words of a Seer, a man of realisation, are the most convincing proof. And you cannot challenge such evidence, for they speak with such power and authority that our doubting nature is overcome, and the truth flashes of itself from its hidden recesses within the heart. One who has eaten his fill just now, will never believe assertions to the contrary by outsiders, for he has the most convincing of arguments,—he is no more hungry. So he can complacently let others prattle whatever they like about him and remain perfectly balanced. Similar is the experience of one who comes in contact with and has his character moulded by an inspired Seer, for he knows in his heart of hearts that his craving is satisfied, that he stands on solid rock, and may easily laugh at the doubts that others may cast at his state.

If the Guru or teacher be powerful enough, if he be a knower of Brahman, and absolutely unselfish, he will not only take the disciple beyond the pale of all physical and mental disquietude, but he will also endow him with power to remove others' bondage also. Like physical objects spirituality also can be transmitted from one person to another, and the qualified disciple has to assimilate it into his life by surrendering himself wholly to his teacher, and trying to practise the

truths inculcated by him with his heart and soul, cheerfully, patiently and with an iron-will. He must have the simplicity of a child, have a burning passion for Truth and be ready to undergo a life-long struggle under the loving direction of his Guru, making purity and a spirit of service his motto: Then in course of time his labours bear fruit through the grace of God and his Guru's blessings and the tangible power of *Guru-shakti* breaks the barriers of ignorance, and all of a sudden flashes forth the illumination that every Hindu believes lies hidden in every soul. Just as the cultivator removes the barrier between one field and another, and the pent-up water rushes of its own force from the higher to the lower field, so the Hindu maintains that the all-powerful, all-knowing, all-blissful Atman lies in every being covered by a veil of ignorance, and as soon as this veil is rent asunder, He manifests Himself of His own nature. Nothing comes to us from outside. Only the obstacle is removed, and what was *already* in us, we are made conscious of. We come to *know* what we have always been, but what, through ignorance, we lost sight of. The teacher here gives the suggestion, and the knowledge flashes of itself. It may be a question of time but the aspirant must be prepared to stake all to achieve this end of human life, the Beatific Vision of the Atman.

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This is Realisation, the corner-stone of the spiritual edifice. Without it no religious experience is considered final or valid. It is the *sine qua non* of all claims to religious acquirement. Having this, you may have it tested by two other methods, viz., the confirmation of the scriptures, and the words of your Guru. And just as there is no difference of opinion with

regard to common external objects, so in the spiritual domain also all these three chime in perfect unison. True scriptures are the records of the realisations in the lives of sages dead and gone, so the experiences of the Sadhaka of to-day harmonise quite easily with what is recorded in the scriptures, and the Guru, the man of realisation in whom, more than in any other, the truth-seeker has the highest repose, comes in to corroborate the experience of the disciple. So when these three kinds of experience agree, there is no more doubt or mistake about the truth of the realisation.

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We started with the remark that religion is the very soul of India. What we meant by this was that India excels all other countries in the possession of this *religion based upon realisation*. To the Indian, God is no mere word to be found in books

and in the lips of the priests alone, but a *fact*, the supreme fact of life, without which life is 'weary, stale, flat, unprofitable.' He does not look upon God as an extraneous Being sitting high up somewhere, and sternly dispensing justice, but He is our Father, Mother, Friend, all in one. Nay, He is the ear of our ear, the eye of our eye, the life of our life, the Self of our self. He is in us and we are in Him. We are One Existence, eternal, all-knowing and all-blissful. There never was a time when we were separate from Him. That we thought so was due to our ignorance of our true nature. But now, through the grace of the Lord and the Guru, the scales have fallen from the aspirant's eyes and he stands face to face with God—his own Self, in a rapturous union, where thought of the world and its miseries are vanished for ever. It is ineffable Peace and Bliss everlasting!

#### SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OR SADHANA.

**I**N all growth of persons who are undergoing any kind of training, mental, or spiritual, there is always a period of stress and storm preceding the living of an ampler life on a higher plane. The evident reason is that those elements or traits of character which have become incorporated in us by repeated living have to be dislodged and the spiritual house set in order, before the higher life can be lived. And these wage a mighty war, "the flesh lusts against the spirit" making the soul grievous. Sometimes the Sadhaka becomes conscious of forces whose existence he had never suspected before, old unconscious thoughts which have

remained hidden and pulled the wire from behind, influencing his life unconsciously; sometimes he sees his evil tendencies and propensities in very intensive forms; this is a period of great difficulty, and embarrassment; there is need of the greatest courage, patience and perseverance to tide over this period of disintegration. The more you struggle, the more involved you seem to be and if we coerce the devil to-day, to-morrow it returns with ten more attendants. The struggle seems endless,—and strong must be the mind and body to bear all this stress. For when one begins to control the Indriyas (the sense-organs) and to starve them, they react with

all their might and the shock of reaction on both body and mind is great enough to break down many a fragile vessel. Sometimes the evil tendencies secrete themselves in a corner of the mind and escape your most searching self-examination; sometimes the faults and short-comings masque themselves under very amiable garb as justifiable emotions and impose on you as to their real character. Success in the process of purification depends on the relentless way in which one can attack the citadel of evil and the less mercy you can show to your faults, and on the refusal to accept any excuse from them. For sometimes the difficulty is that we do not summon up sufficient courage to resolve on throwing away our evil tendencies. We read in the confessions of Saint Augustine how during the period of his purification the old habits; tendencies, prepossessions of his unregenerate life took shape and appeared before him and clutched at his garments beseeching him not to leave them, how long he fell a prey to their wily seductions and had not the heart to renounce them, and only when he made his mind strong enough for abjuring them, they ceased to trouble him. Success also depends not on one brilliant act of triumph but in repeated attacks, though always in the defeat. For in the first acts of rebellion against the accumulated force of old habits and tendencies, one is sure to be knocked down but he may be sure of ultimate success if he can summon up sufficient courage and patience to rise every time he falls.

This period, then, of death before life, of the "dark night of the senses" as Christian mystics have said, must be passed before one can emerge into the clear, bright atmosphere of the spiritual life. One whose previous life has not been cor-

rect but a dedication to the senses, cannot by a few quick strokes dislodge them, transplant a new set of ideas and impressions; they will refuse to be so cavalierly treated. The same amount of pleasure which has been experienced in establishing them will have to be repaid by equal amount of pain and anguish of the soul in dislodging them, but one can quicken the process by intensifying the effort. The great Brahmo leader Keshab Ch. Sen has written in the Life-Scriptures that at the early period of his religious life, levity, frivolity and worldly enjoyment appeared to him like messengers of death, and in his own home, when he heard the ordinary talk of the worldly subjects it sounded in his ears like the roaring of a tiger in his path. Sri Ramakrishna's own words are: "In the period of Sadhana one feels as circumspect and alert and fearful of things around him as if he were living in the same room with a cobra." "In moving among worldly things, one feels like walking on the edge of a deep well."

Thus there appears in the first stage of religious life a great contraction of activity. The Sadhaka hedges himself round with protective walls. He deliberately puts the curb on his will and emotions, he sometimes even undergoes physical torture. For all the powers of his body and mind have so long been subservient to the needs of his material life and selfish interests and they have now to be weaned from them, purified and made fit instruments for the expression of the Divine Life. Hence all this travail, torture, and punishment inflicted on the mind and body, and we now understand how naturally in the course of things it occurs to the religious consciousness.

When he has purified his mind sufficiently, he finds that objects which he had

previously abjured as concealing a fetter or appealing to his lower nature cease to have any meaning for him and with the absence of necessity, the hedges which he had built around himself fall away of themselves. His purified religious consciousness then seeks to overcap all boundaries overspreading all departments of life and activity; objects and activities which he had previously denied, he starts by accepting again as channels for the expression of his new regenerate life. They take on new meaning, they are deified and seen in the light of the spirit. This expansion of life considerably broadens his outlook and adds great freedom to his being. As urgent has been the need of

renouncing objects to which he has been selfishly attached before, equally imperative is the call now to break all limitations and remove all barriers from the path of the expanding religious consciousness. The measure of this expansion of spiritual life must be judged as the measure of the greatness of spiritual attainment. "Deep as the ocean, broad as the infinite sky," has been the summing up by Swami Vivekananda of the life of his Master. And as a crowning realisation, all distinctions between spiritual and secular vanish, everything is covered over by the Lord, the whole of nature gives up its secret and the same Lord is seen as present everywhere.

### EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

( *Translated from Bengali.* )

#### CXXXVI.

541, Dearborn Avenue, Chicago,  
C/o George W. Hale,  
1891.

My dear —

Very glad to receive your letter. I am very sorry to hear of —'s doings. One always behaves thus in trying to push himself before all others. I am not much to blame. — came here ten years ago, and got much reputation and honour; now I am in flying colours. Such is the will of the Guru, what shall I do? It is childishness on —'s part to be annoyed at this. Never mind, उपेक्षितव्यं तदृचनं भवस्सदाशानं महात्मनाम् । अपि कीट-  
देशनभीरुका वयं रामकृष्णसनयास्तद्वद्दयस्थिरपोषितः ।  
“अलोकसामान्यमचिन्त्येहतुकं निन्दन्ति मन्दाश्रितं महात्मनाम्”  
इत्यादीनि संस्मृत्य ज्ञनव्योऽव्यं जात्मः ।—Great men like you shou'd pay no heed to what he says. Shall we, children of Sri Ramakrishna and nourished with his heart's blood, be

afraid of worm-bites? “The wicked criticise the conduct of the magnanimous, which is extraordinary and whose motives are difficult to fathom,”†—remember all this and forgive this fool. It is the will of the Lord that people of this land have their power of introspection roused, and does it lie in anybody to check His progress? I want no name—I want to be a voice without a form. I do not require anybody to defend me—कोऽहं तत्पाद-  
प्रसरं प्रतिरोद्धरुं समर्थयितुं वा, के वाच्ये? तथापि मम हृष्ट-  
कृतज्ञता तान् प्रति!—Who am I to check or to help the course of His march? And who are others also? Still, my heartfelt gratitude to them. “आस्मित्यितो न दुःखेन शुरुणापि विचाल्यते”—  
नैषः प्राप्तवान् तत्पदवीमिति मन्त्रा कल्पणादृषा ब्रह्मयोऽयमिति ।  
—“Established in which state a man is not moved even by great misfortune (Gita)”—that state he has not reached, think of this and

† Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhavam*.

look upon him with pity. Through the Lord's will, the desire for name and fame has not yet crept into my heart, and I dare say, never will. I am an instrument and He is the operator. Through this instrument He is rousing the religious instinct in thousands of hearts in this far-off country. Thousands of men and women here love and revere me. \* \* "मृकं करोति वाचालं पहुङ्कु लक्ष्यते गिरिः"—He makes the dumb eloquent and makes the lame cross mountains. I am amazed at His grace. Whatever town I visit, it is in an uproar. They have named me "the cyclonic Hindu." Remember, it is His will,—I am a voice without a form.

The Lord knows whether I shall go to England or any other blessed place. He will arrange everything. Here a cigar costs one rupee. Once you get into a cab, you have to pay three rupees; a coat costs a hundred rupees; the hotel charge is nine rupees a day.—The Lord provides everything. \* \* The Lord be praised, I know nothing. "सत्यमेव ज्ञाते नानृतम् सत्यनैव पन्था विततो देवयानः"—"Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Through Truth alone lies the path of Devayana." You must be fearless. It is the coward who fears and defends himself. Let no one amongst us come forward to defend me. I get all news of Madras and Rajputana, from time to time. \* \* There are eyes that can see at a distance of fourteen thousand miles. It is quite true. Keep quiet now, everything will see the light in time, as far as He wills it. Not one word of His proves untrue. My brother, do men grieve over the fight of cats and dogs? So, the jealousy, envy and elbowing of common men should make no impression on your mind. For the last six months I have been saying, the curtain is going up, the sun is rising. Yes, the curtain is lifting, by degrees, slow but sure, you will come to know it in time. *He* knows. One cannot speak out his mind. These are things not for writing. \* \* Never let go your hold of the rudder, grasp it firm. We are steering all

right, no mistaking that, but landing on the other shore is only a question of time. That's all. Can a leader be got up, my brother? A leader is born. Do you follow me? And it is a very difficult task to take on the role of a leader.—One must be दासस्थ धासः—a servant of servants, and must accommodate a thousand minds. There must not be a shade of jealousy or selfishness, then you are a leader. First, by birth, and secondly, unselfish,—that's a leader. Everything is going all right, everything will come round. He casts the net all right, and winds it up likewise—देवमनुसरामः। प्रीतिः परमसाधनम्।—ours is but to follow. Love is the best instrument. Love conquers in the long run. It won't do to become impatient—wait, wait,—patience is bound to give success. \* \*

I tell you, brother, let everything go on as it is, only take care that no form become necessary—unity in variety—see that universality be not hampered in the least. Everything must be sacrificed, if necessary, for that one sentiment, *universality*. Whether I live or die, whether I go back to India or not, remember this specially, that universality—perfect acceptance, not tolerance only—we preach and perform. Take care how you trample on the least rights of others. Many a huge ship has foundered in that whirlpool. Remember, perfect devotion minus its bigotry—this is what we have got to show. Through His grace everything will go all right. \* \* Everybody wants to be a leader, but it is the failure to grasp that he is *born*, that causes all this mischief. \* \*

Our Matrons are all hale and hearty, I hope? Where is Mother?—We want a thousand such Mothers, with that noble stirring spirit. \* \* We want all. It is not at all necessary that all would have the same faith in our Lord as we have, but we want to unite all the powers of goodness against all the powers of evil. \* \* A besetting sin with Sannyasins is the taking pride in their monastic

order. That may have its utility during the first stages, but when they are full-grown, they need it no more. One must make no distinction between householders and Sannyasins—then only one is a true Sannyasin. \* \*

A movement which half a dozen penniless boys set on foot and which now bids fair to progress in such an accelerated motion,—is it a humbug or the Lord's will? If it is, then let all give up party spirit and jealousy, and make united action. A universal religion cannot be set up through party faction. \* \*

If all understand one day for one minute that one cannot become great by the mere wish, that he only rises whom He raises, and he falls whom He brings down, then all trouble is at an end. But there is that egotism,—hollow in itself, and without the power to move a finger: how ludicrous of it to say, 'I won't let anyone rise!' That jealousy, that absence of conjoined action is the very nature of enslaved nations. But we must try to shake it off. That terrible jealousy is characteristic of us. \* \* You will be convinced of this if you visit some other countries. Our fellows in this respect are the enfranchised Negroes of this country—if but one amongst them rises to greatness, all the others would at once set themselves against him and try to level him down by making a common cause with the whites. \* \*

At any cost, any price, any sacrifice, we must never allow that to creep in among ourselves. Whether we be ten or two, do not care, but those few must be perfect characters. \* \* 'It is not good to ask of one's father if the Lord looks after the provision.' And the lord *will* do so, set your minds easy on that score. \* \* We must spread his name in Rajputana, Punjab, U. P., Madras, and such other provinces—yes, in Rajputana, where still there are people who can say, 'Such has ever been the custom with Raghu's line that they keep their word even at the cost of life.'

A bird, in the course of its flight, reaches a spot whence it looks on the ground below with supreme calmness. Have you reached that spot? He who has not reached there has no right to teach others. Relax your limbs and float with the current, and you are sure to reach your destination.

Cold is making itself scarce by degrees, and I have been almost through the winter. Here in winter the whole body becomes charged with electricity. In shaking hands one feels a shock, accompanied by a sound. You can light the gas with your finger. And about winter, I have written to you already. I am coursing through the length and breadth of the country, but Chicago is my 'Math,' where I always return after my wanderings. I am now making for the east. He knows where the bark will reach the shore. \* \*

Has — the same sort of love for you? Does he see you frequently? How is B—and what is he doing? Do you visit him, and look upon him with an eye of regard? Yes, brother, the distinction between Sannyasin and layman is a fiction, 'मृक्क करोति वाचाल' &c.—He makes the dumb fluent &c. My friend, it is difficult to judge what is in a particular individual. He (Sri Ramakrishna) has spoken highly of him and he deserves our respect. Fie upon you if you have no faith even after so much experience! Does he love you? Please convey to him my hearty love and esteem. My love to K—, he is a very noble soul. How is —? Has he got a little faith and devotion? My love and greetings to —. — is moving all right with the mill, I suppose? Ask him to have patience and the mill will go on all right. My heart's love to all.

Ever yours in love,

Vivekananda.



## SHANTI ASHRAMA DAYS.

(BY A WESTERN DISCIPLE.)

**T**HE last lectures by Swami Vivekananda on the Pacific Coast were delivered in San Francisco in May, 1900. They were on the Bhagavad Gita and were given at the residence of the since deceased Dr. Logan, the first president of the Vedanta Society which was founded by the Swami. These lectures were attended mainly by students who had followed the Swami through all or most of his discourses and classes in San Francisco, Oakland, and Alameda, and were in character as well as in point of time the culmination of all his platform and class work. They were his final words of advice and admonition to his students and devotees who under Swami Turiyananda were soon to enter upon a new phase of the Vedanta work in the establishment of the Shanti Ashrama.

One great theme was carried through all the Swami's teachings, and that was the necessity for spiritual self-reliance. "Religion is for the strong," he shouted again and again. So in conclusion he took up the Gita, dwelling on the error of Arjuna in confounding his spiritual welfare with his disinclination to tread the stern path of duty as it was laid out for him by the energies of his nature which had not yet been neutralized by spiritual culture. He made it clear, however, that Arjuna really did know his duty, but that his eyes were temporarily blinded by his moral weakness in facing the supreme crisis of his life because apparently it led into the jaws of death. He further brought out the point that Arjuna fortified his position by spiritual sophistry.

He stood before us arrayed in his Sannyasin garb, reading from the original Sanskrit, translating and expounding. With a few prefatory remarks on the first chapter he launched into the second chapter. The great point he brought out was the attitude of mind one should assume in meeting the real problems of life. The greatest obstacle to the right attitude of mind, he said, was fear of the difficult. So he said, "Be brave! Be strong! Be fearless! Once you have taken up the spiritual life, fight as long as there is any life in you. Even

though you know you are going to be killed, fight till you *are killed*. Don't die of fright. *Die fighting*. Don't go down till you are *knocked down*." Then with his right arm extended he thundered, "Die game! Die game! Die game!" That one sentence rang through those last lectures, "Die game! Die game! Die game!" They were his farewell words to his disciples, his goodbye. Then he was gone, and the supreme epoch of my life was a thing of the past, but a thing of the past in name only. He still lives perhaps as virile as ever, at any rate not less real than before. Through his *being* I know that *God is*. He opened the spiritual eyes, revealing in intermittent flashes the Light beyond the darkness, which disclosed winding away into the indefinite future the tortuous, thread-like way of spiritual endeavour.

While he was here one drank in the sweetness of his wonderful love, absorbed the spiritual nectar by mere contact. Now came the time to think it all over, to digest what had been taught, and to blaze the trail for one's self which must, sooner or later, bring him face to face with the Reality which the Swami's personality revealed not too strongly for the world-soaked mind to stand. But he left us with these humble words: "I will send you another, a greater than I, one who lives what I talk about. I will send you Swami Turiyananda." We wondered what such a being would be like, and looked forward with senses strained for the revelation. Then the great Swami Turiyananda came. He came in childlike sweetness and humility, vibrant with spiritual fire, in the words of Rama-krishna Paramahamsa Himself, "fresh as a newly-blown flower, and pure as a dew-drop." His personality touched us where we lived, and led far and away into the bright eternity awaiting our comprehension.

Swami Vivekananda and Swami Turiyananda towered into the blinding light of pure spirituality ages beyond our grasp. Swami Vivekananda outlined the entire scope of the Vedanta, stirring into life dormant possibilities and bestowing life where before there was none. Swami Turiyananda

directed and trained the mind to stand alone and to be loyal to the impetus gained.

With the coming of Turiyananda the Shanti Ashrama sprang into existence and a new chapter was entered upon; not a chapter dealing with different phases of the Vedanta from what had already been outlined, but one bringing into prominence a personal touch which developed our powers of introspection and stirred into activity those rational and emotional energies which constitute religious enthusiasm. The energies of the mind were trained to think along thought-currents into which our lives had been turned by Swami Vivekananda, if not actually to meditate.

To what extent had the mind been merely passive to the Swami's personality? It is one thing to be taken possession of by an embodiment of spirituality, such as Vivekananda, but quite another to regain possession of one's self and consciously build into one's life somewhat of the wisdom of the master. He gave to us the priceless heritage of ages of spiritual culture. He held before our very eyes the mystic mirror of self-revelation. One caught fleeting glimpses of himself as the conscious subjective entity of innumerable personalities which in the crucible of lives had been cast aside as inadequate. Now could he hold the vision till his personality had thrown off its Tâmasic density and excessive Râjasic nature so that he would know for certain the Reality of his being in, if need be, many recurrent personalities? Henceforth would the mind work in sustained effort to the elimination of obstacles? Or as soon as the novelty wore off would consciousness again sink into the age-worn ruts and feel itself swept along by that strange, irresistible Karmic current? It all depended upon the mind's reaction to the influence given it. It was right here on the threshold of such considerations that Swami Turiyananda took hold of the situation. The days of listening to mere lectures were over. Students now gathered about the Swami in classes and went to him for personal guidance.

Although Swami Turiyananda particularly importuned me to go to the Ashrama, the Fates decreed otherwise, and I was doomed to see him depart for India without being with him at the Ashrama. The pain of this was somewhat mitigated by my experience with him in Oakland.

His presence converted my home into an Ashrama. Priceless were those long, intimate talks and councilings with him, and attempts at meditation in the sanctity of his presence. We took many long morning and evening walks which, though tangibly through city streets, were in a finer and truer reality far from the locale of industrial life. They led into the immeasurable distances of spiritual idealism. We walked into the sun-rise and into the sun-set bathed in a radiance more glorious than any terrestrial sun. I was being initiated into the inner philosophic and spiritual life of India, India whose towering Himalayan peaks are as symbols of her sages whose thoughts rest in the eternal Presence of God.

The reports of the Ashrama by those who had made pilgrimages there with the Swami were uniformly enthusiastic in its praise. Desiring to know the Swami's personal idea of the place I asked, "Swami, is the Ashrama really such an ideal place?"

"Yes," he replied, "it is an ideal place,—for an Ashrama."

"What do you mean by 'ideal for an Ashrama'?" I queried.

"It is a good place to meditate on God," he answered, giving a little characteristic backward tilt to his head and looking at me with an amused expression in his half-closed eyes.

"What significance will a place like the Ashrama have in Western civilisation?" I asked.

"The same it has in any civilisation where the people want to know God. As people become spiritually minded in any country, a place to retire to from time to time becomes a necessity. Even the most spiritual men retire from the world occasionally even though their particular work is in the world."

Then one bright day I met G. He came to Oakland from the Ashrama for a short visit. This event was momentous to me. I had heard much about him from Swami Turiyananda, and had been looking forward to this meeting with the happiest expectancy. I could not know, however, how much the coming years held for me in a deep spiritual sense through his loving friendship. G. was a Westerner with all the educated Westerner's practical knowledge at his finger-tips. But like others who aspire to become spiritual characters, he turned from the life for which he was trained

throwing all the energy of his mind into the work of knowing God. That he was on the way to success, there was not the slightest doubt in the minds of those who knew him. It was just this that made his life significant. His example was a wonderful source of encouragement, a constant incitement to be "up and doing" at every moment. In time we grew to revere him as a noble character of supreme poise whose conduct to the most trivial details of his daily life was beyond the possibility of criticism even to the Western mind which is naturally on the look-out for some little irregularity to quibble over. As was stated in a previous article, the Shanti Ashrama owed its existence to his career, thus demonstrating that genuine necessity is the mother of opportunity. He gave himself without reservations to the Lord, and the time came when it was vitally necessary for him to be protected from the money-mad world in which he was living his intense life of devotion to God. Then one of the faithful stepped forward and gave the place which became the Shanti Ashrama, and the matter was settled.

The lure of the Ashrama now became stronger than ever. I looked forward to going there with an enthusiasm which knew no bounds, but it was not until after Swami Turiyananda had left for India that the day of opportunity came. The Swami Trigunatita with a number of students was there for a month; circumstances permitted me to remain but two weeks. There were ten of us of varied dispositions, view-points and expectations, a merry party, who one bright November morning started for the Ashrama. The first night was spent in San Jose, and on the following morning we journeyed to Mt. Hamilton by team. From this prominent peak of the Coast Range mountains, some 4200 feet above the sea, ridge after ridge of timbered mountains tier downwards as far as the eye can reach. Nestled thirty miles distant in the depth of those wooded hills is the Shanti Ashrama. About seven o'clock in the evening we drew rein at the Ashrama gate, and were cheerily greeted by G. Supper was in waiting and we had a jolly time of it during the meal. The Swami was in his usual happy mood, telling stories and cracking jokes and teasing each one of us in turn. After supper came the work of settling for the night. At first there was some confusion as to the allot-

ment of tents, but finally things were temporarily arranged and at ten o'clock we were wrapped in slumber dreaming of the morrow and of the succession of days to be spent there.

The next day dawned bright and clear and was passed in putting up tents and settling into permanent quarters. There were two log-cabins on the Ashrama, G.'s cabin and the tool-house. The meditation-cabin was a light board affair about twelve by fifteen feet in size, and a cabin once occupied by Swami Turiyananda was also of light boards. The dining room was canvas built out from a shack, which was used as a kitchen. Each one slept in a tent. I was given the tent occupied on former occasions by Swami Turiyananda, the only place I really coveted. It was situated on the most beautiful place in the Ashrama, on an eminence overlooking the greater portion of the Ashrama. The spot was practically level, and was made inviting on hot days by a cluster of oak trees. From this place I looked about me on the land of my dreams and found it good to look upon; and it was good also to breathe deeply of the pure, dry air heavily laden with the fragrance of wild growth.

The Ashrama is just a segment of a typical California cow-country. From the flag-pole, situated between the meditation cabin and the dining room, it extended to its eastern boundary in a rolling field of aromatic tar-weed with here and there clusters of oaks. The western and southern portions were cut up into rugged ravines with successive chapparel-covered hills with patches of pine, oak and manzanita. The Santa Ysable creek traverses the place in a south-easterly direction.

The days passed in reading, talking and meditating. Each one did his share in the practical work. The women took turns in cooking and washing dishes; and the men in carrying water, cutting wood and odd jobs. It was an experiment which, all things considered, turned out as favourably as one could optimistically expect. On the surface it was just a prolonged picnic; under the surface it was what each made of it. The prolonged commingling of diverse dispositions in a new venture naturally gave rise to many occasions for self-restraint and not a few for self-abasement.

The Swami had a merry time of it adjusting conditions as adjustment was needed and in giving

advice and encouragement in general. He enjoyed himself and made no attempt to conceal it. He was bubbling over with good spirits, and was ever ready for a romp or a contest of wits.

G. with his keen visage and penetrating, clear, blue eyes moved among us a figure apart. He did not by any means hold himself aloof, but, on the contrary, entered into the give and take contests with the rest. But, clearly, he was a good witness. Serious, at times abstractly so, he was, notwithstanding, open to friendly and familiar approach. Again and again his eyes would fairly dance with suppressed mirth. At times he would give vent to outright laughter, and at such times it was as if God were with him in his fun. I availed myself of every opportunity to come into personal touch with him. His personality had an irresistible fascination for me, for to my mind there was no doubt but that God had drawn him closely to Himself. As in the cases of Swamis Vivekananda and Turiyananda, the character of G. was an assurance of the existence of God, an intimate and loving God actually present with us in every event of our common life.

Life at the Ashrama was routine. The days began at 5-30 in the morning and closed commonly at 10 o'clock at night. G. was the first one up in the morning taking upon himself the duty of arousing the camp. He would walk from tent to tent chanting Om, Om, Om, pausing at each tent until he received a response before proceeding to the next. Could a more auspicious opening of the day be imagined than to be aroused from sleep by the sonorous intoning of Om? Many mornings I was awake before he made his round and would lie waiting to hear the first far-off sound of his voice as he began his chanting. Gradually his voice drew nearer and nearer until it sounded directly in front of my tent. I would answer immediately by chanting Om, whereupon he would turn away, his deep-toned chanting gradually dying away in the distance.

There were three meditation classes a day,—one in the morning before breakfast, again before lunch and again before supper. At these classes the Swami read something, after which we meditated. After that we asked questions, talked and made merry. Very pleasant memories cluster about the meditation cabin. The weather was

cold, being November, and we were forced to have warm fires while sitting. The odour of the burning wood filled the room as with the fragrance of incense. We sang and chanted, joked, told stories and played with philosophical questions. Everyone had good intentions. The little band was welded together, I am sure, by the association into a bond which is sure to survive this present lifetime.

Two special practices were introduced by the Swami during my stay there,—that of solitary retirement, and that of the *dhuney*-fire. The retirement experiment consisted in each one going into retirement without food or water for twenty-four hours. The time was supposed to be devoted as continuously to prayer and meditation as possible. The period began at day-break and terminated at day-break the following morning. The Swami made periodical rounds to see how each one was progressing. I got along all right the greater part of the day. In the late afternoon I was attacked with nausea and by ten o'clock it had grown so violent that I thought discretion the better part of valour and went deliberately to bed in which place I was found the next morning instead of sitting in *padma* posture lost to the external world. This was a surprise to everyone save myself, and especially to those who knew me best. But no one knew me as I knew myself and hence there was no surprise on my part. That I was not a stoic had been demonstrated to my entire satisfaction on many previous occasions. I think that I was the only one who got sick, though I was not the only one who went to bed. In commenting on it the Swami said that he thought I showed considerable fortitude in not howling for help, instead fighting it out alone. I think he meant well enough, though I must confess I thought it a rather dubious compliment. I shall always be glad for the attempt, however, for thereby I gained some valuable experience.

In the course of a few days the *dhuney*-fire event took place. It turned out to be a symbolic and picturesque affair. It had rare artistic values, and went down in memory as one of my unforgettable experiences. We knew it was going to take place long beforehand; in fact, before we left for the Ashrama it was the one big feature which we were looking forward to with keen curiosity. Finally the day

came on the night of which we were to have the fire. The men busied themselves in gathering sufficient logs to keep a fire burning throughout the night. These logs were placed on a prominent knoll and everything put in readiness for the event. About eight o'clock we gathered about the log-pile ready for the fire. Each one had a blanket thrown about him and a pillow for a seat. It was a cold, cloudless, moon-lit night. The fire was lighted and we took our seats around the welcome blaze. The flames shot upward in the night, intensifying the darkness beyond, obliterating all distant objects save the black outline of the hills silhouetted against the moon-lit sky. For a time we sat in silence, each one apparently enjoying the novelty of the scene. Wrapped in blankets and seated cross-legged around the fire, it occurred to me that we resembled somewhat a band of American Indians seated in council around their campfire.

The stillness was broken by the crackling of the flames as they greedily licked up the dry, aromatic wood and by the incessant barking of coyotes, whose sharp, vicious yelps came from all quarters at once; now seemingly right upon us, and now receding into the distance and ending in one lone, long, hungry wail far away in some ravine. Then the wild chorus would break out in renewed fury. They came so close at times that I could hear the ferocious, gutteral snarl at the end of a series of lusty, savage barks, just before fresh breath was taken for another series. They serenaded us throughout the night, and not until the sun rose did the last snappy yelp die away in the distance.

After sitting for a while in the stillness described, my attention was drawn to the human side of the situation by the sonorous voice of the Swami, chanting in Sanskrit. Then he explained the purpose of the *dhuney*-fire. Each one was supposed to take serious issue with himself, to delve deeply into his subconscious mind, dissect its content and mentally cast into the fire all taint which could in its working out develop into an obstacle to the knowledge of God. Then we sang, chanted and meditated at intervals.

At first when the fire showed signs of waning, some one would replenish it from the stock of logs at hand. Replenishing the fire, by the way, was a coveted job during the first half of the night

as it afforded a legitimate excuse to stand up and stretch the limbs. Before Morpheus made his rounds that fire was diligently kept alive; afterwards it was attended by those who happened to feel most in need of it. After midnight, enthusiasm to maintain an upright position waned all around the circle. Little by little each one dropped under the strain, and then one by one gave up the struggle and made him comfortable for the night. Some lay down and sat up at intervals. Perhaps they could meditate better in a recumbent position. I will not judge; but I know that I lay down the better to sleep. The Swami, G. and Dhira were the only ones who remained sitting throughout the night. The sun was up before we disbanded. A heavy dew had fallen during the night and the blankets had to be hung up to dry. That day all were released from formal meditation. The Swami was suffering intensely from a tooth-ache and everyone was in need of rest.

At the expiration of two weeks my first experience at the Ashrama terminated. All things considered the trip was well worth while. Days together spent in close personal touch with different dispositions in the common endeavour to draw close to God could not but be productive of happy incidents in the unwitting disclosures of character which the periodic meeting at classes in the city could not afford. New friendships were formed and old ones deepened whose fragrance will always be with us as the years pass, and finally when we pass.

The distance from the meditation cabin to the Ashrama-gate was about a quarter of a mile. It was a winding road lined with oaks and pines and affording many pleasant views into near-by woody swails and nooks on the one hand, and over open rolling country to where the sky-line met the ridge of mountains on the other. How many miles were traversed by us all from time to time along this road as we talked and talked and idealised together! The really momentous hours to me, hours which were more than pleasant, more than happy, which tapped the hidden springs of consciousness, were spent with G. Along this road we walked into great distances with that sure and steady step which led away from the confinements of past traditional life into the unexplored territory of the care-free life of Sannyasa. With him

there were no idle moments. Conversation flowed easy and deep, now slowly as emotional life was stirred to its depths, now lightly as the guise of caprice reflected the clear depth of his mind. From him there were no tricks of rejoinder; the utmost sincerity and comrade freedom being ever present. It was this contact which placed a spiritual halo about that first Ashrama experience, and which made a second trip inevitable.

Then intervened a time of probation for and anticipation of the day when I would be permitted to see the Ashrama again. Finally the day dawned, August 19, 1905. Now no one knows better than I that, despite the contact with great souls, there is no well-beaten highway to spirituality. Each wayfarer must hoe his own road. The actual course

of the illuminate closes after him without leaving a trace, like the way of an aviator through trackless space. There are, however, some guide-signs, some verbal directions, which successful mariners of spiritual depths have left for such as would follow. These are universally accepted though they are malleable to temperament, temperature, grades of intelligence and emotional fluctuations. Each attempt, therefore, to follow advice intended to indicate the general course of a spiritual aspirant is an adventure into the trackless wastes of the mind, into the sterile regions of thought-delusion, into the labyrinths of thought-creation or happily beyond into the Light.

(To be continued.)

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA AND HIS RELIGIOUS MESSAGE TO THE MODERN WORLD.

*(The gist of a paper read by Mr. V. C. Seshacharry, B.A., B.L. at the 83rd Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna at the Bangalore Math.)*

**J**IT gladdens my heart to see the several hundreds of people gathered here under the one common impulse of offering respectful homage to the high and exalted memory of the most distinguished of Mother India's modern saints, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. This is indeed a rare occasion, which is sure to produce in our hearts a thrill of exquisite joy and ineffable bliss.

We seem to live in an age of ferment when competitive commercialism with its ever aggrandising policy is still keeping at bay co-operative industrialism. Scarcely had the waves of Godless education and rank materialism made their appreciable advance on modern humanity when we find ourselves caught in the overpowering deluge which presently threatens to annihilate the charming solitude, the lofty isolation and the sweet simplicity, alike calculated to promote the ever-growing peace and harmony in man's bosom. Look in what direction you like, whether in fields of social, political or religious activity, you are faced with the spectacle of humanity being impelled by sordid selfishness instead of by sublime spirituality.

This then is the sorry spectacle of the unfathomable abyss into which the bulk of humanity has plunged itself to-day.

The comity of nations has become a mere mockery and individualistic and nationalistic competition has worked for exclusion and elimination of the weak. Might has become the right of the strongest and in this sharp conflict, the weakest must inevitably go to the wall. In ancient days, fierce crusades were conducted in the name of religion and God and now after ages of enlightened civilisation with humanistic ideals, we feel and realise we are less human. Never in the history of the world did we witness such unspeakable agitation, fierce ferment, and universal unrest.

It is worth one's while to reflect on the various currents and cross-currents along which humanity is drifting to-day. What lends absorbing interest to this reflection is the query, Does the present situation make for chaos and confusion or for cosmos and harmony? Is life an empty dream signifying nothing or a living reality pregnant with purpose? The answer comes in faint echoes from a far distance that the discord of to-day will

become the concord of to-morrow and the present harrowing pain and suffering will lead us to future joy and pleasure ineffable. Increasing difference must ultimately land us in increasing unity. The depth of hell may spell as the height of Heaven. The world of to-day grown weary with its interminable woes and worries fondly longs for lasting harmony and eternal peace. The throes of present torment will cease and will bring us into a region of quiet and joy. Selfishness, difference, discord and competition will yield their place to altruism, unity, fraternity and co-operation. India, the mother of all religions, has ever stood for a spiritual synthesis of life constructed on renunciation and love. Time and again, she has proclaimed from her Himalayan tops the expansive and harmonising power and potency of spiritual life. There are no doubt pessimists who are inclined to the view that the varied social barriers and class and caste differences which still exist in our land may work for separation and division and not for union and solidarity. According to them the Western contact has introduced a new militant culture, which is highly fascinating on account of its siren voice and sweet seduction. But to those who own the clearness of vision and can see things in their right perspective, the existence and operation of forces which are already working to bring about the union and strength of the Indian nation as a whole are matters of easy discernment. It must also be conceded that from one point of view complexity and heterogeneity are essentially the stepping-stones to a larger simplicity and homogeneity. In this sacred land of ours which has always been recognised as the spiritual battle-ground of humanity, warring ideals and keen conflicts can be quelled and reconciled by the peace-inducing light of true Vedanta.

In recent years there has sprung up in our land a school of thought which seems to gain in prestige by attempting to proclaim that religion should be divorced from social and political life, on the ground that it encourages mysticism and quietism and that philosophy which teaches man to realise God within himself is an apathetic feeling of inertia which is calculated to kill all national activity. The futility of this theory is quite apparent and needs no lengthy argumentation to refute it. In the Western countries and continents

where individualism and self-sufficiency have been marching on the crest of the top-wave of advancing materialism, we see to-day the ruinous results of such ungodly tendencies and inclinations.

To us it is almost axiomatic that the vitality of a nation depends entirely on its religious ideals and upon its religious men who not only preach such ideals but also practise them. This Bhāratavarsha was at its best at the time of its greatest sages. The birth of a sage in our land signifies a high watermark in the tide of enlightened civilisation. It is a cosmic event and the whole world which till then seemed to wear a dull aspect feels rejuvenated and thrills with joy at the occurrence of such an auspicious event. We shall now turn our thoughts to the sublime life-history of the Messiah of this Age--Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and try to find solace from his gospel of universal strength and peace and love.

Four scores and two years have rolled by, since the garden of humanity put forth its fairest bud which in the fulness of time grew into the loveliest blossom in the person of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the fragrance of whose living memory is still wafting aloft in sweet-smelling waves, to enrich and enliven human thoughts all over the living world. Truly did Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna sum up in his life the highest and noblest ideals of philosophy and religion, and the practical realisation of the precepts he preached enhances the value of his teachings to his direct disciples and the thousands upon thousands of thinking men who have in recent years caught the inspiration of his life and quaffed it deep almost to the point of intoxication. To him religion was the bedrock on the solid foundation of which the edifice of a nation's greatness was to build. If I but attempt to faintly lisp his message to the modern world I feel that I shall not be able to do justice to the sublimity of the topic in hand. But it will prove a source of immense satisfaction to me if I but succeed, in however small a measure, in rousing a spark of religious fervour and devotion in the bosom of every one present here to-day.

On the memorable date of the 17th February, 1836, the baby eyes of Sri Ramakrishna opened to the light of earthly existence, at a little village called Kamarupukur in the District of Hugli in Bengal, which has now become famous as the

birthplace of the greatest of Indian Sages of modern times whose life and teachings have penetrated into every nook and corner of this earth and have enlivened many a dark home.

His parents came of a highly respected though poor Brahmin family and the only wealth they possessed was spirituality. Sri Ramakrishna's father, Khudiram Chattopadhyaya, was a pious devotee and his affectionate mother, Chandramani Devi, was the personification of love and kindness. There were early signs of future greatness marked out in indelible characters both in his childhood and in his youth. He picked up the three R's in his village school and even as a child was taught to lead a pure and pious life by his parents. He showed a remarkable aptitude to learn holy songs and it was a source of immense delight to him to recite the same. His manners were sweet and simple and men, women and children were all fond of him and loved to possess him. In youth he became imbued with the life and teachings of the various incarnations of God. We shall not be far wrong if we said that every fibre of his body was attuned to the highest philosophical and religious ideals, so much so that when he was only seven years old he saw within himself a transcendent vision of glory. To the ignorant it seemed as if he were in a state of unconscious fit. But to students of Religion it spelt verily the higher consciousness of the stage of *Samadhi* which represents the highest rung in the ladder of *Yoga*.

You had only to look into his eyes to catch a glimpse of the serenity of his soul, the eyes being verily the windows thereof. He practised in himself a universal tolerance, a great harmony and supreme love. When he was barely seventeen, he repaired to Calcutta with his elder brother for further study and looking after his household. And when the temple at Dakshineswar, a village 4 miles from Calcutta, was built by a pious Bengalee lady in affluent circumstances known as Rani Rasmani, Pandit Ram Kumar, the elder brother of Sri Ramakrishna was constituted the officiating priest of the temple and later Sri Ramakrishna himself was appointed assistant priest there. The image of Mother Kali had a fascination for him and riveted his attention. Thinking that marriage might bring him round to worldly pursuits, his

people married Sri Ramakrishna to Sri Sarada-mani Devi, the daughter of Ram Chandra Mukhopadhyaya of Joyrambati, the bride being only 6 years old. After marriage he returned to the temple garden at Dakshineswar and the worship of the Mother Kali became his daily routine and by his earnestness and passionate love he was soon blessed with a vision of his Divine Mother, and on many an occasion he enjoyed the ecstatic bliss of the superconscious stage. The carnal idea of marriage never appealed to him and his consort was looked upon as a helpmate and the marriage itself was but a union of souls for the achievement of higher ends.

Sri Ramakrishna received his grounding in the Tantra-Shastra at the hands of a devout Brahmin lady who recognised him as an incarnation of Sri Chaitanya, the Super-man of Nadia. He now reached a turning point in his life and one day met in the temple garden the famous Tota Puri who initiated him into Sannyasa and preached to him the sublimity of the Vedanta philosophy. In three days he reached the culmination of this Sadhana, attaining the highest or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Soon the teacher recognised that his disciple was the veriest crucible of action in which all dross was burnt up, leaving behind the immaculate pure gold. Sri Ramakrishna desired very much to acquaint himself with all the priceless teachings of the great religions prevailing in India and abroad, including various forms of Vaishnavism, Christianity and Mahomedanism, and he believed that in order to assimilate them and make them part and parcel of his nature he could not do better than live the life of the prophet of each religion. Strange to say he succeeded in realising the highest ideals of each religion in an incredibly short time and thus qualified himself for the lofty role of the world-teacher that he was destined to play in future. His ever-increasing piety, his God-intoxicated life, his extreme renunciation of lust and gold, the ceaseless flow of words of wisdom, simple, clear and convincing, his wonderful insight into human character, his universal toleration and world-embracing love, these and a thousand other qualities of head and heart soon brought round him a growing number of admirers, among them Keshub Chandra Sen who brought him to the notice of the Calcutta

public, and towards the end of the year 1882, Narendra, later known as the world-renowned Swami Vivekananda—the foremost of his disciples, joined him, together with a number of others, and grew in the likeness of his much revered and beloved master. The supreme monarch of the spiritual kingdom Sri Ramakrishna applied himself heart and soul to form the character of these boys so that they might realise their inmost nature and serve as teachers of mankind.

He then had his exit from the arena of this world in August 1886, leaving it much better than he had found it.

Having very briefly dwelt upon the early life of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and invited your attention to the several steps which the Bhagavan took in his spiritual career, for the attainment of the goal of Vedanta, in other words, the union between the Undifferentiated (the Universal) Soul and the Differentiated (the individualised) Soul, it is my wish next to present before you, in however meagre a way, the message conveyed by his wonderful teachings and interesting parables. The foremost topic is the idea of the Unity of Godhead which the Bhagavan has proclaimed in his characteristically lucid words of wisdom :—

"Many are the names of God and infinite the forms that help us to know Him. By whatsoever name or form you desire to know Him, in that very form and under that very name will you see Him."

"Different creeds are but different paths to reach the one God, various and different are the ways that lead to the temple of the Mother Kali at Kalighat. Similarly various are the ways that lead to the house of the Lord. Every religion is nothing but one of such paths that lead to God."

Another topic of interest on which the Bhagavan has discoursed is the Philosophy of the Unconditioned, in regard to which he has said :—

"Knowledge leading Godward is the last and topmost step of the stairs leading to the roof. The Absolute is the roof. The phenomenal world is made up of that which leads Godward and that which does not. Thus God the Absolute is above and beyond the phenomenal world."

"The Absolute again is like the unfathomable ocean. Nothing can be predicated of It—the Being

beyond the bounds of Reality, of all existence! The last feeble attempt to describe the Being—the attempt made in the Vedas is to call Him by the name of Bliss Everlasting."

This is why the Great Mystery defies all attempts at explanation. The Absolute and Unconditioned cannot be stated in terms of the Relative, the Conditioned. The Infinite cannot be expressed in terms of the Finite.

"God the Absolute cannot be thought of apart from the idea of God with attributes or God Personal and *vice versa*. The Unconditioned, the Absolute, the Noumenon, the Substance, on the one hand, and the Conditioned, the Relative, the Phenomena, the Attributes, on the other hand, are correlatives—the one cannot be thought of apart from the other.

"Vijnánis are they who have realised God in Samadhi, both as the Impersonal or Undifferentiated and as the Personal or Differentiated."

The above statements will enable the student of Vedanta philosophy to realise how hard to tread is the path of Jnana-Yoga which is only intended for the few who are accustomed to live in the world of thought.

A third topic is Faith or Shraddhâ, regarding which the following are the Paramahamsa's aphorisms :—

"Faith is omnipotent, reason is weak. Faith will work wonders, reason cannot go far enough and must stop at some point or other."

"Before faith the powers of nature all shrink and give way. You get over seas and mountains with perfect ease and utter indifference."

"He who has faith has all and who lacks faith lacks all."

It is therefore evident that faith is the cardinal stone of the path of Bhakti-Yoga, the path intended for the large majority of people who cannot ascend the steep and narrow path of Jnana-Yoga.

Sri Ramakrishna's ideas in regard to Karma-Yoga are well expressed in the following passages :—

"Work for the sake of one's own worldly good—riches, honour, fame—is degrading ; worldly activity will only bring an increasing ignorance."

That being so, let all work be done as it ought to be. If work is done unattached it will lead to God. Work so done is a means to the end, and

God is the end. To work without any attachment is to work without the expectation of any reward, or fear of any punishment in this world or the next. It is possible for the ideal man alone to live a perfect life of work without attachment. Let us however try our best to do the duty that is nearest us. Let us purify our motives for work by earnest prayer and self-surrender.

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was of opinion that among the three paths, that of Bhakti was the one which was suitable for the ordinary householder, because all that it required was intense devotion, firm faith and great love on the part of the devotees to their Ishta Devatā ( Chosen Ideal ).

The teachings given on the most abstruse subjects of philosophy were always made clear by the Bhagavan by his homely sayings which contained the inner truth that remained therein.

Numerous are the themes of kaleidoscopic variety over which Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna has discoursed to his dear and devoted disciples, and the disciples lived, moved and had their being in their master and each reflected a portion of his wonderful and many-sided personality.

Swami Vivekananda speaks of his master's message to the modern world in his usual ringing voice thus :—

"Stand you up and realise God ! If you can renounce all wealth and all sex, it will not be necessary for you to speak. Your lotus will have blossomed, and the spirit will spread. Whoever approaches you will be warmed, as it were, by the fire of your spirituality.

"Care not for doctrines or for dogmas, for sects or for churches. All these count for but little, compared with that essence of existence which is in each one and called spirituality. The more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good.

"Then be you this ! The more such men any country produces, the higher is that country raised. That land where no such men exist is doomed. Nothing can save it. Therefore my Master's message to the world is, "Be ye all spiritual ! Get ye first realisation !" And to the young and strong of every country he would cry that the time was come for renunciation. Renounce for the sake of humanity ! You have talked of the love of man, till the thing is in danger of becoming words alone. The time is come to act. The call now is, Do ! Leap into the breach, and save the world ! "

The message of Sri Ramakrishna Deva briefly told is one of intense light and love, of infinite harmony and toleration and of selfless service and sublime renunciation, and its peace-producing and soul-refreshing charm has reached each nook and corner of this vast globe. May his great memory ever stay with us ! May his sublime message ever spur us on to unselfish work ! And may we ever walk in the light of his footsteps and prove each one of us a tiny centre of active beneficence in our own families, communities and nations ! May the sweet notes of his lyre ever ring melodious in our hearts and may we ever carry with us in all our activities of life his sweet cheer, and "sweet grace ! .

### VIVEKACHUDĀMANI

(Continued from page 91.)

त योगेन न सांख्येन कर्मणा नो न विद्यया ।  
द्वाद्यात्मैकत्वबोधेन मोक्षः सिद्धचति नान्यथा ॥५६॥

56. Neither by Yoga, nor by Sankhya, nor by work, nor by learning, but by the realisation of one's identity with Brahman is Liberation possible, and by no other means.

[None of these, if practised *mechanically*, will

bring on the highest knowledge—the absolute identity of the Jiva and Brahman—which alone, according to Advaita Vedanta, is the supreme way to liberation.

'Yoga' may mean Hathayoga which strengthens the body.

According to the Sankhya philosophy liberation is achieved by the discrimination between Purusha and Prakriti. The Purusha is sentient but inactive,

and all activity belongs to Prakriti, which is non-sentient, yet independent of the Purusha. The Sankhyas also believe in a plurality of Purushas. These are the main differences between the Sankhya and Vedanta philosophies.

*Work*—Work for material ends, such as getting to heaven and so forth, is meant.

Compare Svetasvatara Upanishad, III. 8.—‘‘Seeing Him alone one transcends death, there is no other way.’’]

**वीर्याया रूपसौन्दर्यं तन्त्रीवादनरौषुवम् ।  
प्रजारञ्जनमात्रं तत्र साम्राज्याय कल्पते ॥५७॥**

57. The beauty of a guitar's form and the skill of playing on its chords serve merely to please some persons, they do not suffice to confer sovereignty.

**वाग्वैखरी शब्दभरी शास्त्रव्याख्यानकौशलम् ।  
वैदुष्यं विदुपां तदद्भृक्ये न तु मुक्तये ॥५८॥**

58. Loud speech consisting of a shower of words, the skill in expounding Scriptures, and likewise erudition—these merely bring on a little personal enjoyment to the scholar but are no good for Liberation.

[ Book-learning to the exclusion of realisation is deprecated in this and the following Slokas.

*Loud speech*.—Speech is divided into four kinds according to its degree of subtlety. *Vaikhari* is the lowest class, and represents articulate speech. Hence, dabbling in mere terminology is meant.]

**अविज्ञाते परे तत्वे शास्त्रार्थितिस्तु निष्फला ।  
विज्ञातेऽपि परे तत्वे शास्त्रार्थितिस्तु निष्फला ॥५९॥**

59. The study of Scriptures is useless as long as the highest Truth is unknown, and it is equally useless when the highest Truth has already been known.

[ Prior to realisation, mere book-learning without Discrimination and Renunciation is useless as it cannot give us Freedom, and to the man of realisation, it is all the more so, as he has already achieved his life's end.

**राक्षजालं महारणयं चित्तभ्रमणकारणम् ।  
अतः प्रथत्नाज्ञातव्यं तत्त्वज्ञेस्तत्त्वमात्मनः ॥६०॥**

60. The Scriptures consisting of many words are a dense forest which causes the mind to ramble merely. Hence the man of wisdom should earnestly set about knowing the true nature of the Self.

**अज्ञानसर्पदेष्ट्य ब्रह्मज्ञानौषधं विना ।  
किमु वैदैश्च शास्त्रैश्च किमु मन्त्रैः किमीष्वैः ॥६१॥**

61. For one who has been bitten by the serpent of Ignorance the only remedy is the knowledge of Brahman; of what avail are the Vedas and Scriptures, Mantras and medicines to such a one?

**त गच्छति विना पानं व्याधिरौषधशब्दतः ।  
विनाऽपरोक्षानुभवं ब्रह्मशब्दैर्न मुच्यते ॥६२॥**

62. A disease does not leave off if one simply utter the name of the medicine, without taking it; (similarly) without direct realisation one cannot be liberated by the mere utterance of the word Brahman.

**अकृत्वा दृश्यविलयमज्ञात्वा तत्त्वमात्मनः ।  
ब्रह्मशब्दैः कुतो मुक्तिरुक्तिमात्रफलैर्नेणाम् ॥६३॥**

63. Without causing the objective universe to vanish and without knowing the truth of the self, how is one to achieve liberation by the mere utterance of the word Brahman?—it would result merely in an effort of speech.

[ *Without causing...vanish*.—By realising one's identity with Brahman, the one without a second, in Samadhi, one becomes the pure Chit (knowledge absolute), and the duality of subject and object vanishes altogether. Short of this, ignorance which is the cause of all evil is not destroyed.]

**अकृत्वा शङ्खसंहारमगत्वाच्चिलभूत्रियम् ।  
राजाहमिति शब्दान्तो राजा भवितुमर्हति ॥६४॥**

64. Without killing one's enemies, and possessing oneself of the splendour of the entire surrounding region one cannot claim to be an emperor by merely saying, ‘I am an emperor.’

आत्मोक्ति खननं तथोपरिशिळाद्युत्कर्षणं स्वीकृतिं  
निक्षेपः समपेक्षते नहि बर्हः शब्दे स्तु निर्गच्छति ॥  
तद्वद्विविदोपदेशमननध्यानादिभिर्भयते ।  
मायाकार्यतिरोहितं स्वममलं तत्वं न दुर्युक्तिभिः॥

65. As a treasure hidden underground requires (for its extraction) competent instruction, excavation, the removal of stones and such other things lying above it and (finally) grasping, but never comes out by being (merely) called out by name, so the transparent Truth of the Self, which is hidden by Maya and its effects, is to be attained through the instructions of a knower of Brahman, followed by reflexion, meditation and so forth, but not through perverted argumentations.

[ *Nikshepah*—something remaining hidden. The idea is—one must undergo the necessary practice. ]

तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन भवत्त्वविमुक्तये ।  
खैरेव यत्नः कर्तव्यो रोगादाविव परिडृतैः ॥६६॥

66. Therefore the wise should, as in the case of disease and the like, personally strive by all the means in their power to be free from the bondage of repeated births and deaths.

थस्त्वयाद् कृतः प्रश्नो वरीयाच्छालविन्मतः ।  
स्त्रूतप्रायो निगृद्धार्थो ज्ञातव्यश्च मुमुक्षुभिः ॥६७॥

67. The question that you have asked to-day is excellent, approved by those versed in the Shastras, aphoristic, pregnant with meaning and fit to be known by the seekers after Liberation.

[ *Aphoristic*—terse and pithy.]

श्रुणु व्यावहितो विद्वन्यन्मया समुदीयते ।  
तदेतच्छ्रवणात्सद्यो भवत्त्वव्याद्विमोक्षसे ॥६८॥

68. Listen attentively, O learned one, to what I am going to say. By listening to it you shall be instantly free from the bondage of Samsara.

मोक्षस्य हेतुः प्रथमो निगद्यते  
वैराग्यमत्यन्तमनित्यवस्तुषु ।  
ततः शमश्चापि दमस्तितिक्षा  
न्यासः प्रसक्ताखिलकर्मणां भृत्यम् ॥६९॥

69. The first step to Liberation is the extreme aversion to all perishable things, then follow calmness, self-control, forbearance, and the utter relinquishment of all work enjoined in the Scriptures.

[ *Aversion, calmness etc.*—These four have been defined in Slokas 20—24. Cf. Sruti—शान्तो दान्तं उपरतस्तितिक्षुः ।

*All work*: all work done with motive, including the good ones prescribed in the Shastras and those that are evil—which men do prompted by their own nature. ]

ततः श्रुतिस्तन्मननं सतत्व-  
ध्यानं चिरं नित्यनिरन्तरं मुनेः ।  
ततोऽविकल्पं परमेत्य विद्वा-  
निहैव निर्वाणसुखं समुच्छति ॥७०॥

70. Then come hearing, reflection on that, and long, constant and unbroken meditation, for the Muni. After that the learned one attains the supreme Nirvikalpa state and realises the bliss of Nirvana even in this life.

[ Compare Bri. Upa. II. iv. 5.

*Hearing*—of the Truth from the lips of the Guru.

*Meditation*—the flowing of the mind in one unbroken stream towards one object.

*Muni*—the man of reflection.

*Nirvikalpa state*—that state of the mind in which there is no distinction between subject and object—all the mental activities are held in suspension, and the aspirant is one with his Atman. It is a superconscious state, beyond all relativity, which can be *felt* by the fortunate seeker, but cannot be described in words. The utmost that can be said of it is that it is inexpressible Bliss, and Pure Consciousness. Nirvâna, which literally means ‘blown out,’ is another name for this. ]

( To be continued. )

## THE CHARITABLE DISPENSARY,

R. K. MATH, BELUR.

During the year 1917, the Charitable Dispensary at the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, Howrah, made a good progress, as the number of prescriptions served during the year was 15,161 as against 13,470 in 1916. This increase of about 50 p. c. was attended with a corresponding increase in the number of patients treated, which was 4372 during the year. Some of these were given diet in addition to medicines and some were treated at their own homes.

The dispensary also attracted people from distant places such as Bally, Jillooah, Ghusari, Sulkea, Belur Station etc. who were drawn from all castes and creeds, from Hindus as well as Mahomedans.

Our special thanks are due to Messrs. B. K. Paul & Co., Calcutta for supplying us with almost all the medicines free of charge. Our thanks are also due to the proprietors of the Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works, Messrs. D. Gupta & Co. and other private gentlemen who kindly helped us occasionally.

List of diseases treated in 1917 and the number of patients suffering from each:—

Malarial fever 2,97; Diseases of the Respiratory system 253; Diseases of the Eye and the Ear 155; General diseases 89; Diseases of the Generative system 143; Of the Teeth and Gums 93; Of the Skin and its appendages 217; Of the Alimentary system 1113; Infectious diseases 33; Miscellaneous cases 179.

Classified list of the patients during the year:— Hindus:—Male 1552, Female 919, Children 661. Mahomedan:—Male 591, Female 273, Children 301. Of other religions 75.

The following donations have been received during the year 1917, for which thanks are due to the donors:—

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Quinine, acids and miscellaneous drugs purchased in 1917 amounted to Rs. 33 2-0.

All subscriptions, donations, medicines etc. will be thankfully received by the undersigned or by the Secretary, R. K. Mission, 1, Mukherji Lane, Bagh-Bazar, Calcutta.

BRAHMANANDA

President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission,  
Belur, Howrah.

## NEWS AND NOTES

## THE Ramakrishna Students' Home, Madras.—

We have received the annual report of the above institution for the year 1917. Started thirteen years previously, it has been providing free board and lodging and healthy environments to scores of poor students who come to the town from the out-lying parts of the Presidency to prosecute their college studies. The boys who come to the town fresh from their homes are liable to be surrounded by undesirable influences and it is a pleasure to notice that some of them are taken in hand by the Home and their lives placed under noble formative influences. The Home is connected with the Ramkrishna Mission, Madras and the Swamis of the Mission exercise a beneficial and religious influence on the life of the students. Missionary bodies all over the world have taken pains to mould the lives of the young and it is a highly beneficial move that the Ramkrishna Mission, Madras, has interested itself in forming the character of the youth of Madras. Since its inception the Home has considerably expanded its work, the number of boarders having gone up from 6 to 30; the receipts also have risen to the amount of Rs. 9,543-12-5. The visitors have borne eloquent testimony to its usefulness. By thirteen years useful work the necessity of the Home has been established. In order to make it a permanent institution, a plot of land has been secured and a fund for the construction of a building opened, of which nearly Rs. 3000 has been collected. Contributions for the building fund may be sent to Srimat Swami Sharvananda, President, Ramakrishna Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras.

THE ninth annual report of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bharukati, shows a progressive record of work undertaken by the above institution. Started with the object of building lives on the ideals and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and rendering social service in the form of religion, to minister to the sick and succour the needy and to exercise a beneficial influence in forming the character of the young, it has been carrying out its work faithfully and steadily. In the charitable dispensary connected with the Ashrama, it treated and nursed 61 patients; in the school, 82 poor boys received free education up to the Upper Primary standard; it also organised water-supply in several local Melas where the people suffered a great deal in former years from scarcity of water. Religious classes were also held in which our sacred scriptures were studied and discussed. In fine, the Ashrama is a glowing testimony to what every large-hearted, public-spirited man in his humble sphere in villages and townships can do to improve the lot of his fellowmen and withal to purify and broaden his own mind and heart.

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प्राप्य वराप्रिदोधत् ।

Katha Upanisad, I, vii, 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

VOL. XXIII ]

JUNE 1918

[ No. 263

## CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

### XV.

Place—*The rented Math at Belur.*

Time—*February 1898.*

Subjects: *References to Swamiji's boyhood and youth and a Vision he had in those days.—About certain supernatural powers experienced in America, in which he felt as if someone was pushing a mass of thoughts for lectures from within.* ]

Swamiji has removed the Math from Alambazar to Nilambar Babu's garden at Belur. Though the inmates have removed to this house yet things have not yet been all put in order. Swamiji has been very glad to come to these new premises. He said to the disciple when the latter came, "See how the Ganges flows by and what a nice building! I like this place. This is the ideal kind of place for a Math." It was then afternoon.

In the evening the disciple saw the Swamiji in the upper story, and the talk went on, on various topics. There was no one else in the room. The disciple rose now and then to prepare tobacco for Swamiji, and in the course of varied con-

versation wanted to know about Swamiji's boyhood days. Swamiji began to say, "From my very boyhood I was a dare-devil sort of fellow. Otherwise do you think I could make a tour round the world without a single copper in my pocket?"

In boyhood Swamiji had a great predilection for hearing the chanting of the Ramayana by professional singers. Whenever such chanting would take place in the neighbourhood, he would attend it leaving sport and all. Swamiji related how, while listening to the Ramayana, on some days, he would be so deeply engrossed in it as to forget all about home, and would have no such idea as that it was late at night and he must return home,

and so forth. One day during the chant he heard that the monkey-god Hanuman lived in banana orchards. Forthwith he was so much convinced that when the chant was over he did not make for home straight that night but loitered in a banana orchard close to his house, with the hope of catching sight of Hanuman, till it was very late in the night.

Among the personages of the Ramayana Swamiji had an unbounded regard for Hanumana. Even after he had become a Sannyasin he would now and then go into raptures over the topic of Hanumana, whenever it arose, and often thought of placing a stone image of Mahavira (Hanuman) at the Math.

During his school-days he used to pass the day-time only in playing and gambolling with his mates, and study at night, bolting the doors. And none could know when he prepared his lessons.

\* \* \* \*

The disciple asked, "Did you see any visions, Sir, during your school-days?"

Swamiji.— While at school, one night I was meditating within closed doors and had a fairly deep concentration of mind. How long I meditated in that way, I cannot say. It was over, and I still kept my seat, when from the southern wall of that room, a luminous figure stepped out and stood in my front. There was a wonderful radiance on its visage, yet there seemed to be no play of emotion on it. It was the figure of a Sannyasin absolutely calm, shaven headed, and staff and Kamandalu (a Sannyasin's wooden water-bowl) in hand. He gazed at me for some time, and seemed as if he would address me. I too gazed on at him in speechless wonder. Then a kind of fright seized me, I opened the door and hurried out of the room.

Then it struck me that it was foolish of me to run away like that, that perhaps he might say something to me. But I have never met that figure since. Many a time and often have I thought that if again I saw him, I would no more be afraid but would speak to him. But I met him no more.

Disciple.— Did you think on the matter afterwards?

Swamiji.— Yes, but I could find no clue to its solution. I now think it was the Lord Buddha whom I saw.

After a short pause Swamiji said, "When the mind is purified, when one is free from the attachment to lust and gold, one sees lots of visions, most wonderful ones! But one should not pay heed to them. The aspirant cannot advance further if he sets his mind constantly on that. Haven't you heard Sri Rāmkrishna used to say, 'countless jewels lie uncared for in the outer courts of my beloved Lord's sanctum.' We must come face to face with the Atman, what is the use of setting one's mind on vagaries like those?"

After saying these words Swamiji sat silent for a while, lost in thought over something. He then resumed :—

"Well, while I was in America I had certain wonderful powers developed in me. By looking into people's eyes I could fathom in a trice the contents of their minds. The workings of everybody's mind would be patent to me, like a fruit on the palm of one's hand. And to some I used to give out these things, and of those to whom I communicated these many would become my disciples; whereas those who came to mix with me with some ulterior motives, would not, on coming across this power of mine, even venture into my presence any more."

"When I began lecturing in Chicago and other cities, I had to deliver every week some twelve or fifteen or even more lectures at times. This excessive strain on the body and mind exhausted me to a degree. I seemed to run short of subjects for lectures, and was anxious where to find new topics for the morrow's lecture. New thoughts seemed altogether scarce. One day, after the lecture I lay thinking of what means to adopt next. The thought induced a sort of slumber and in that state I heard as if somebody stood by me and was lecturing; many new ideas and new veins of thought, which I had scarcely heard or thought of in my life. On awaking I remembered them and reproduced them in my lecture. I cannot enumerate how often this phenomenon took

place. Many, many days did I hear such lectures while lying in bed. Sometimes the lecture would be delivered in such a loud voice that the inmates of adjacent rooms would hear the sound and ask me the next day, 'with whom Swamiji, were you talking so loudly last night?' I used to avoid the question somehow. Ah, it was a wonderful phenomenon."

The disciple was wonder-struck at Swamiji's words and after thinking deeply on the matter said, "Sir, then you yourself must have lectured like that in your subtle body, and sometimes it would find an echo in the gross body."

Swamiji listened and replied, "Well, may be."

(To be continued).

## OCCASIONAL NOTES.

**T**HE first original sin, if there be one, is the idea of self-identification with the body. From this one basic idea flow as necessary corollaries, the whole host of our ideas which constitute the nexus of relations by which the Infinite Spirit or soul of man finds himself entangled in the bondage of the world. It is the presupposition of all our thinking, it enters into all human calculations, dominates our whole mental horizon and determines all its hopes and fears. Whatever ministers to its enjoyment fills us with joy, and whatever takes away from it makes us immediately miserable; and the body and its happiness enters a good deal into all our imaginings of future happiness. If we could imagine a place where bodily enjoyments do not fill a great part it will certainly be a very uninhabitable, barren

world for us. To some the consciousness is so much pent in within the consciousness of the body, that they cannot even contemplate their being separate from the body without fright and the loss of it means utter blankness to them.

But the moment we accept the Self as the centre of our being, there is a thorough transvaluation of our outlook on life. The world around us, then, instead of giving suggestions of dead matter, becomes replete with suggestions of the Spirit and instead of inhabiting a dead world and moving among lifeless objects, we begin to live in a world which is realised to be as mind-born. One of the first effects of purification of soul from the thraldom of matter is seen to be in an awakening of our faculties, and objects of

sense which had previously conveyed no meaning to us are seen as aflame with intelligence, pregnant with suggestions which carry the mind to a wholly different region.

All poets must have reached a state of mind similar to this. Their world was not pent in within the consciousness of the body, but by the very refinement of their feelings and power of emotion they lifted themselves above the body and reached to expansive planes of vision; instead of regarding the body and adjuncts of the body as the Self and the rest of the world as "not-self" they have broken this artificial barrier and been in communion with the whole, of which they have felt themselves to be parts. Much of Wordsworth's poetry breathes of this holy communion with nature; to him the "meanest flower that blows have given rise to thoughts too deep for words;" and all his days have been "bound together by natural piety."

If we are to be spiritual, we have deliberately to take birth in a world of thought. The whole of thinking has to be replaced by a new order of thinking. The *Vichara* (reasoning) arising from true *Viveka* (discrimination), that the Self is thoroughly separate from the body, and unaffected by the deficiencies of the latter, has to be impressed on the consciousness by repeated thinking. "न है सशरीरस्य सतः प्रिया-मिथ्यारपद्धति आस्ति।" "For the embodied being there is no freedom from pleasure and pain. Do not we see how often our thinking and imaginings are based on the presupposition that we are body first and a Soul afterwards, and that which advances the interests of the body is accepted with avidity, and the interests of the Soul are ignored or subordinated to it? This

has to be reversed. We have to regard ourselves as Spirit first and body afterwards, as souls manipulating a body for the interests of the Soul; we have also to regard our fellow-beings as spirits, souls, and conform our relations and attitude to them accordingly and ignore, discard, or altogether renounce all relations and ties which have the least taint of materiality in it.

This attitude of mind will greatly improve our human and social relations and instead of binding us fast in chains and slavery to those whom we affect to love it will give rise to the bliss of non-attachment in all our human relations. It will also deepen our relations and love. Our feelings and emotion for those we love will not lose anything in intensity, it will increase a hundredfold, yet it will not make us selfish, or attached to our objects of love. For all relation in which the body is involved is sure to vanish after a time and always results in a reaction; but it is the spiritual relations alone that lives and grows too in course of time.

"अशरीरं नावं सन्तं प्रियामिथ्ये न स्पृशतः।" "For the disembodied existence there is no tainting by pleasure and pain," so says the *Sruti*. So it is possible by *atma-nigraha* (Self-restraint) to gradually draw back our consciousness which is spread over the whole body and to concentrate it on the super-physical Self or Atman of man. In that is Freedom, the advent of all immortality and the end of all death. This is compassed in different ways in the different *Yogas*. The *Jnani* by his philosophical reasoning and with his powerful will as the weapon tears away his consciousness from the body and masses it in the Self; by his mind he denies the pain

and pleasure of the body, his brain refuses to record them, though to the outward nerves and senses it might be intense anguish or superlative pleasure. The Bhakta by intensely loving and adoring an Ideal Abstract Being, God, and as his attention concentrates on Him, the physical pain and pleasure of his body is drowned in the high flood-tide of his spiritual emotion and love for God. The Yogi manipulates powers in the different centres, and as his mind rises to higher and higher centres or planes, the consciousness of the lower ones is inhibited and when he rises to the thousand-petalled (Sahasra) centre in the brain, he feels himself thoroughly

dissociated from the body and immersed in the effulgent radiance of his own Swarupa (True Self).

Religion ought to be able to give us the conquest of the Flesh. So long as this does not come, we are bond-slaves to Nature, slave to a little bit of food, a little bit of pleasure or pain, trying our best to nourish, and preserve this bundle of flesh and bones which anything can scatter to pieces in a moment. Religion will free us from this incubus of body-consciousness, this haunting fear of the loss of this "fleshly tabernacle."

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### GOD AND THE DIVERSE WORLD.

**T**HIS question is asked, why in the reign of an all-powerful and just God there should be so much disparity of conditions, such apparent hardships, one born with a healthy frame and vigour of mind and in circumstances which help him to grow up into a noble character, while another, the opposite, with an indifferent endowment of the qualities of head and heart and born in circumstances which repress the expression of the highest in Him, but only tend to emphasise all the weak and mean elements of his being. However much we may push the question backwards and forwards, by bringing in the operation of Karma, previous work, or of reward for sufferings, hereafter, the real crux of the question is not destroyed. For the question remains ultimately, why should there be present suffering and disparity of conditions leaving aside all questions of future reward; that is injustice enough to taint the character of God, the

Paragon and Prototype of all human virtues. The idea of future rewards or happiness compensating present suffering, or present disparity, the effect of past works may satisfy to some extent our human sense of justice but with regard to God, the fountain of all justice, it may be well be asked why under His dispensation shall good be reached through evil, shall present suffering be undergone for future happiness—why, this injustice of method?

The answer to the question will depend greatly on our conception of God. If it is One who has created the world independently out of pre-existing matter completely under his control, just as a Kumbhakar fashions a pot, if he is an anthropomorphic God only who by his fiat produces this world and Jivas and rules the world just as a high potentate rules the kingdom, if God, Soul and Nature are all separate entities, then there is no getting away from

the objection. He is arbitrarily pleased and displeased with people. We are separate entities from God, there is nothing common in substance between Him and us, there is nothing to bind Him with us but we are completely under His control, the relation between Him and us is between the ruler and ruled and our only hope is to try and curry favour with Him and whoever succeeds in that becomes his favourite, enjoying exclusive privileges. Such a conception of God never solves the problem of misery and suffering but only intensifies it. In some crude dualistic sects such questions will not be allowed to be asked but stifled in the asking, the way they propose is to seek by praise and otherwise to propitiate Him and thereby get saved.

The Vedantic conception of God is not that of an extra-cosmic who rules the world from without. He is a God immanent in the universe. It is He who has become everything. The Ishvara or the Personal God of the Vedanta is not absolute truth. He is relative to individual souls and the world. The same reasoning which requires the positing of an Ishvara, the Creator, Ruler and Preserver of the Universe, involves the positing of Jiva (individual souls) and the Jagat (world), it is a logical necessity. In Sri Ramakrishna's words: "As the king cannot be without courtiers, so God cannot be without devotees." Not that the Impersonal God of the Vedanta, the Satchidananda, is different from the Personal Ishvara, the same Brahman when looked upon with reference to creation is called the Ishvara, and when He is thought of in his absolute perfection apart from creation, he is the *Akhand Satchidananda* (undivided Sat, Chit, Ananda). The same Brahman has become 'the triad, the Ishvara, the Jiva, and the Jagat in Its

creative aspect and when Ishvara creates, he creates relative to Jivas, and not independently. Jivas therefore are of the substance of God, the difference between them is not of kind but of degree. They are all the same qualitiless, absolute Brahman and as such are one, but with reference to creation they become the triad, Ishvara, Jiva and Jagat. The difference of Upadhis (condition) which constitute the Jiva has been produced by Karma, therefore Ishvara creates relatively according to Karma. The creative activity of the Lord operates in accordance to the Karma of Jivas. One cannot argue that the diversity of Upadhis (conditions) which constitute Jivas did not exist primarily in the first creation according to which the Lord will create, the Vedantist replies that creation is conterminous with diversity which is subsumed in it. As creation is again conterminous with the conception of Time, creation is without beginning, so with the fact of creation, we are forced to assume simultaneously the play of Karma and the diversity of Jivas. It is an infinite chain, of which no beginning can be fixed in which we find Karma and diversity of conditions playing as cause and effect in an endless chain.

By the above rigorous logic, the Vedantist rebuts the argument of partiality and cruelty on the part of the Lord in the act of creating this world of diverse conditions and diverse order of beings and throws the onus on the individual. But He is there all the time helping us according to our lights. He is the Chaitanya (essence of Intelligence), the infinite ocean of Intelligence, Knowledge and Bliss, and we draw upon this reservoir, according to our needs. Upon us depend how we employ it. By employing this intelligence to break our bondage, we become the most

God-enrapture saint and by misusing that power man also becomes the most monumental villain. He is the essence of Intelligence lighting up this material world, and by the help of that Light, we live, move and have our being. He brings works to their fruition, He energises and vivifies everything. He has been compared to the rain-cloud that showers down fertilising waters but only those fields that are tilled and cultivated, turn it to advantage. Swami Vivekananda's words

are apposite to this point: "Is it the fault of Merciful Father whose wind of mercy is blowing without ceasing, whose mercy knows no decay, that some are happy and some unhappy? We make our own destiny. \* \* He neither punishes nor rewards. His infinite mercy is open to everyone. Upon us depends how we utilise it?"

Such a God meets the ends of reason and justice and reconciles human endeavour and worth to Divine Grace and Mercy.

### EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(*Translated from Bengali.*)

#### CXXVII.

New York

25th September, 1894.

My Dear ——

Glad to receive some letters from you. It gives me great pleasure to learn that S— and others are making a stir. We must create a stir, nothing short of this will do. You will be throwing the whole world into convulsions. —Victory to the Guru! You know, "श्रेष्ठसि दुर्भवप्राप्तः" —"Great undertakings are always fraught with many obstacles." It is these obstacles which knock and shape great characters. \* \* Is it in the power of Missionaries and people of that sort to withstand this shock? \* \* Should a fool succeed where scholars have failed? It is no go, my boy, set your mind at ease about that. In every attempt there will be one set of men who will applaud, and another who will pick holes. Go on doing your own work, what need have you to reply to any party? "सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं सत्यनैव पन्था विततो देवयानः" —"Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Through Truth lies the path of Devayana." \* \* Everything will come about by degrees.

Here in summer they go to the seaside,—I also did the same. They have got almost a

mania for boating and yachting. The yacht is a kind of light vessel which everyone, young and old, who has the means, possesses. They set sail in them everyday to the sea, and return home, to eat and drink and dance, —while music continues day and night. Pianos render it a botheration to stay indoors!

I shall now tell you something of the —s to whose address you direct my letters. He and his wife are an old couple, having two daughters, two nieces and a son. The son lives abroad where he earns a living. The daughters live at home. In this country relationship is through the girls. The son marries and no longer belongs to the family but the daughter's husband pays frequent visits to his father-in-law's house. They say,

'Son is son till he gets a wife  
The daughter is daughter all his life.'

All the four are young and not yet married. Marriage is a very troublesome business here. In the first place one must have a husband after one's heart. Secondly, he must be a moneyed man. \* \* They will probably live unmarried; besides, they are now full of renunciation through my contact and are busy with thoughts of Brahman!

The two daughters are blondes that is, have golden hair, while the two nieces are brunettes, that is, of dark hair. They know all sorts of occupations. The nieces are not so rich, they conduct a Kindergarten school, but the daughters do not earn. Many girls of this country earn their living. Nobody depends upon others. Even millionaire's sons earn their living, but they marry and have separate establishments of their own. The daughters call me brother, and I address their mother as Mother. All my things are at their places, and they look after them, wherever I may go. Here the boys go in search of a living while quite young, and the girls are educated in the universities. So you will find that in a meeting there will be 99 per cent. of girls. The boys are nowhere in comparison with them.

There are good many spiritualists in this country. The medium is one who induces the spirit. He goes behind a screen, and out of the latter come ghosts, of all sizes and all colours. I have witnessed some cases, but they seemed to be a hoax. I shall test some more before I come to a final conclusion. Many of the spiritualists respect me.

Next comes Christian Science. They form the most influential party, now-a-days, figuring everywhere. They are spreading by leaps and bounds, and causing heart-burn to the orthodox. They are Vedantins; I mean, they have picked up a few doctrines of the Advaita and grafted them upon the Bible. And they cure diseases by proclaiming "सोऽहं सोऽहं"—"I am He! I am He!"—through strength of mind. They all admire me highly.

Now-a-days the orthodox section of this country are crying for help. 'Devil worship' † is but a thing of the past. They are mortally afraid of me and exclaim, "What a pest! Thousands of men and women follow him!

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† The Orthodox Christians brand Hindus and people of other religion with this name and look upon them with scorn.

He is going to root out orthodoxy!" Well, the torch has been applied and the conflagration that has set in through the grace of the Guru, will not be put out. In course of time the bigots will have their breath knocked out of them. \* \*

The Theosophists have not much power. But they, too, are dead set against the orthodox section.

This Christian Science is exactly like our *Kartibhajā* ‡ sect: Say, "I have no disease," and you are whole; and say, "I am He"—"सोऽहं"—and you are quits,—be at large. This is a thoroughly materialistic country. The people of this Christian land will recognise religion if only you can cure diseases, work miracles, and open up avenues to money, and understands little of anything else. But there are honorable exceptions. \* \*

People here have found a new type of man in me. Even the orthodox are at their wit's end. And people are now looking up to me with an eye of reverence. Is there a greater strength than that of Brahmacharyam,—purity, my boy?

I am now busy writing a reply to the Madras Address, which was published in all the newspapers here and created a sensation. If it be cheap, I shall send it in print, but if dear, I shall send a type written copy. To you also I shall send a copy; have it published in the Indian Mirror. The unmarried girls of this country are very good and have a good deal of self-respect. \* \* These (the people) are come of Virochanā's<sup>¶</sup> race. To them ministering to the body is a great thing: they would trim and polish and give their whole attention to that. A thousand instruments,

‡ An offshoot of Vaishnavism during its degeneracy. They call God "Kartā" or Master and are noted for their efficiency in faith-cure.

¶ The King of the Asuras and son of the saintly Prahlada. He went to Brahman for self-knowledge, but misunderstanding His teachings turned a materialist. (Chhāndogya Upa., Chap. VIII.)

for paring mails, ten thousand for hair-cutting, and who can count the varieties of dress and toilet and perfumery? \* \* They are good-natured, kind, and truthful. All is right with them but that enjoyment is their God. It is a country where money flows like rivers, with beauty as its ripple, and learning its waves, and which roll in luxury.

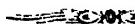
"कांचनः कर्मणं तिक्ष्ण वज्रन् इह देवताः ।  
तिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके तिद्धिभवति कर्मजा ॥"

—“Longing for success in action, in this world, (men) worship the deities. For success is quickly attained through action in this world of man.” (Gita)

Here you have a wonderful manifestation of grit and power—what strength, what practicality, and what manhood! Horses huge as elephants are drawing carriages that are as big as houses. You may take this as a specimen of gigantic proportions in other things also. Here is a manifestation of

tremendous energy.\* \* They look with veneration upon women, who play a most prominent part in their lives. Here this form of worship has attained its perfection—this is the long and short of it. But to come to the point. Well, I am almost at very wits' end to see the women of this country! They take me to the shops and everywhere, as if I were a child. They do all sorts of work—I cannot do even a sixteenth part of what they do. They are like Lakshmi (the Goddess of Fortune) in beauty, and like Saraswati (the Goddess of Learning) in virtues—they are the Divine Mother incarnate, and worshipping them, one verily attains perfection in everything. Great God! Are we to be counted among men? If I can raise a thousand such Madonnas—Incarnations of the Divine Mother in our country, before I die, I shall die in peace. Then only will your countrymen become worthy of their name. \* \*

(To be continued).



## SEEKING HIM, THE GOAL OF LIFE.

(SWAMI VISHUDDILANANDA.)

**B**LESSED indeed are those souls who have seen God. The highest aim of human life is to realise Him within and without. “Can God be seen?” On being asked by his illustrious disciple Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna replied, “yes, He can be seen, and in a more intense way than we see the things around us.” Most of us doubt the existence of God, there are few who simply believe in Him, never strive to seek Him but remain satisfied with the things of the world; and fewer still are persons who not only believe in Him but think it to be the noblest duty in life to see Him.

Our mind is naturally drawn to the sense-objects and we run after them in the hope of getting a bit of pleasure to satisfy the senses. How momentary is this sense-pleasure

and how quickly it vanishes! Sense enjoyments can never give us everlasting happiness, but on the other hand by running after them we multiply desires by thousand fold, with the result that the desires keep constantly playing upon our minds and goading us on more and more to satisfy them and are never satiated by enjoyments. Thus we bind ourselves fast to Samsara (world). We read in the Mahabharata that the king Yayati had a great craving for the enjoyments of the flesh. He thought sense enjoyments to be the be-all and end-all of human existence. But being old, he could not satisfy them within the brief span of one lifetime. Desires began to sting him like scorpions and getting almost restless he at last borrowed the youth of his son in exchange for his old age to enable

him satisfy his animal [cravings]. The son was so devoted to his father that he did not grudge it. Thus, the king enjoyed for long, long years the sense-pleasures, but to his great surprise, he found that he never could get to the end, that his *vāsanās* (desires) were increasing by leaps and bounds instead of being satisfied by those objects of enjoyments. Then he abdicated the throne for his son, returned the youth to him and retired to the forest to spend his last days in contemplation of God.

The lesson we derive from the above story, that desires can never be satisfied but on the other hand they increase. As the more butter we put into fire, the more it flares up. We find this also in our every-day life how the more we multiply desires and seek to satisfy them the more we are cheated by nature and never attain our object. Hence they are to be controlled. When we have been cheated by Nature a hundred times then gradually, with the awakening of Viveka (discriminative faculty) we come to subdue them more and more and fix our gaze on God.

The positive way to control these *vāsanās* is to develop *faith* in Him and worship Him as one dearest to us on earth. He is the mine of bliss and happiness and if we cling to Him with implicit faith, we get the bliss Divine compared with which, the pleasures of the senses are of no consequence. As this faith in Him will develop, our mind will involuntarily recede from sense-objects which will then turn stale and insipid and be concentrate in Him. We find in our lives in what an unbalanced condition our mind is; which rise into waves at the sight of every little danger and provocation and when we meet with the great miseries of life we are thrown completely off our balance. To have this faith in God is the *sine qua non* of spiritual Sādhanā (practice). To stand all trials of life, to bear them with perfect equanimity without losing faith in God is the sure test of our intense faith

in Him. Such is the strength of mind of those who hold implicit faith in a merciful and wise Providence Who dispenses everything. Think of the king of devotees, Prahlad! How firm was his belief in God and what an amount of trials and tribulations he had to undergo at the hands of his cruel father. He had not for a moment lost faith in Him. How did the great Pandavas suffer! There was no end to their sufferings! They had faith adamantine in the Lord and they bore them calmly. They clung to the Lord with all their might.

Now when this unshakable faith in the Lord comes, our yearning unto Him increases and then the strong desire to draw near to Him dawns upon our mind. When we are blessed with the yearning, we cannot sit idly. Can a thief remain quiet when he comes to know that a jar of gold is burried at such and such a place! Certainly not, he must have it somehow. So the devotees of God, knowing that He alone is the abode of bliss and that all desires are satisfied in Him when He is realised, cannot sit quiet but strive hard to reach Him. There are various ways to reach God and whatever means and methods a devotee may adopt he must have intense faith and attachment to Him in order to grow *spiritually*. When the thirst for God increases, the ties of Samsāra gradually drop off and we feel no longer the stings of the worldly *vāsanās*. Of course, it requires a long persistent Sādhanā. In course of this spiritual practice, the subtle desires which have been stored up in our sub-conscious mind through myriads of births will forcibly drag us down to the level of Samsāra. But we shall have to take our firm stand on Sādhanā, hold the weapon of Vichāra and shield ourselves with Vairāgyam (dispassion) to fight them out. The real thirst for God will not come until they are completely subdued. When we sincerely practise this spiritual Sādhanā, having faith in the Lord, we find some one helping us in

our endeavour and encouraging us to reach the Ideal. In moments of dejection and depression, when we cry out unto Him, we find that He *actually* comes, consoles, counsels, entreats, saving and encouraging us in our march to Him. We then march onward with redoubled energy and get at last a glimpse of the Lord, and along with it comes the true awakening of the Soul. The spiritual life begins here! We become restless and our heart yearns after Him. When we come to this state of mind, we cannot go into the details of spiritual Sádhanâ. Our mind becomes possessed with Him. As the sweet smell of the lotus attracts the bees, so this vision of God draws us as it were towards Him till we finally become possessed with the bliss Divine, our beloved Lord, God. He manifests Himself to us and we see Him within and without and thus attain the goal of life.

We shall have to strive after God so long as we have the idea of "I-ness," of a separate individual in us. We shall have to exert all our energy during our spiritual Sádhanâ to realise Him. But when we advance in spir-

ituality we find the "puny" egoism is gradually melting away. We then place the burden of our life on Him and come to surrender ourselves completely, at His feet. So long as we have ourselves occupied the throne of our heart, the Lord does not manifest Himself there, but when we vacate it for Him, He shines there in all His glory and takes complete possession of our lives and guides us unerringly through this world of His Maya. Henceforward He will work and we become instrument in His hands. Living in Him all our troubles and fears will end, the disease of the world will be cured, and we shall enjoy great freedom and bliss. We shall work then but work will produce no results, we will love, but love will not bind, in a word, we shall be like the lotus leaves in the water, which the water cannot touch; naught of earth will have power over us and affect us, but our lives will be one of living-freedom, *Jívan-mukta*, moving fearlessly among the things of the world. For we will see our beloved Lord present everywhere and in everything. This resignation of one's self unto God is the goal of our life.

### SHANTI ASHRAMA DAYS.

(BY A WESTERN DISCIPLE.)

*(Continued from page 111.)*

THE first morning, as on every morning thereafter, I was up at five o'clock and stepped forth into the crisp air ready for the bath. I faced the east and looked about on the familiar scene with affectionate eyes. Near-by canyons led away into cavernous shadows though the halo of a perfect summer's morning crested the eastern hills. I breathed deeply of the pure air heavy with the colour of tar-weed and aromatic verdurous life. Somewhat of the vitality of the primitive entered through the pores of my body, and I felt the surging of a virgin life in a land of lawless beauty unfolding into a dawn as fresh as a new-

born creation. The world I had but just left behind was as a dream forgotten. I stood related to naught save the present environment. Life sang in my veins as if consciousness were about to pierce the veil of its own mystery. The dirge of renunciation was not heard, but, rather, the resonant heart-throbs of joy in my blood leaped quicker upon a sudden extension of subjective vision. From that moment the Shanti Ashrama became a land apart from the territory just beyond the fence,—the same yet not the same. The surrounding country was stock range and the habitat of wild-cats, coyotes and lesser things of the wild.

The segment of the same range, called the Shanti Ashrama, was a land where the two ends of life met,—the primitive, where consciousness was masquerading behind hairy, four-legged forms and which shone through eyes glaring with the lust for blood; and the human in which the animal was getting tired of the old game of blood and war, and in which consciousness was turning inward, scanning the horizon of the mind for a glint of that Life which no form can contain. The Shanti Ashrama was a land where the human was trying to snap the cord of slavery, to pierce the *maya* of bondage.

The next hour was passed in the meditation cabin with G. and the young man mentioned. The meditation cabin was a place of diversified interests: Many personalities had been there and were closely associated with the little room, each lending to it something peculiar to itself. I sat in my old position to the left of the door upon entering and directly opposite G. I looked about the room and located the place that each one of the old group had occupied. Designating them by their Sanskrit names, next to me to my left was Sankari, then Yogapriya, Haripriya, Nivritti and G.; then Swami Trigunatita, Dhira, Ujjvala, Prasuti, Uttachitta (?), and Sajjana. We used to sit thus and listen to the Swami read and talk, and then we would meditate. The old times came back to me with peculiar force, and during the first hour they were all there and I could feel their distinct personalities. It was a psychological reunion, the consciousness of a spiritual bond which cannot be dissolved by the lapse of years.

The days began at five in the morning and closed at anywhere from ten to twelve at night. Though our life was routine, it was not inflexible. The ordering of the days was not arbitrarily imposed, but was the inevitable means to the full enjoyment of spiritual Sadhana. There was an hour's meditation before breakfast and two hours of reading, meditating and discussion in the forenoon. The early afternoon each spent as he choose. We met at three o'clock over lemonade in the dining room to discuss the various problems of the spiritual life and the glory of God. Full rein was given to the imagination and to individual expression. Each talked as he pleased,—now capricious and gossipy, now serious, now sceptical

and argumentative and now devotional. Again the invigorating bath after which we usually took long walks along the road to the Ashrama gate. Then came another hour's meditation before supper, which was commonly at six o'clock. Long discussions followed and then another walk along the road to the gate and finally meditation before retiring.

Many times after the last formal meditation we would talk and talk far into the night, nights of starry brilliance whose silence was broken into by the hooting of owls and the barking of coyotes. Those star-lit nights had a mystic content for the ear ready to listen. Voices of the night whose cadences sounded sharp and distinct, denoting individuality, fused into a many-toned expression of the black, brooding stillness. They were the spokesmen of the silence from which they emerged,—the snappy bark of the wild dog, the dismal hoot of the owl and the breath of the night itself breathing gently through the trees accompanied by the occasional snapping of a twig. The senses became alert and the imagination was kindled by the presence of mystery. It was a novel experience and, after a fashion, a meditation merely to sit and listen to these diverse calls from out the surrounding blackness,—a blackness so dense that it assumed to the imagination the aspect of an ominous presence unknown and unknowable, closing in on all sides, pressing as with a physical weight on the senses, crowding one into himself. Then there were moments when this din on the surface of the silence ceased to be through the awakening to subjective realities, and the encircling arms of mystery, dark and unfathomable, were forgotten.

A trivial incident disclosed to me how treacherously near the surface our cave-man instincts lie coiled. In the Ashrama was a cat. This creature was a peculiar animal having a sort of dual nature which I learned to respect from experience. She was loving and docile one moment and ferocious the next. One state would succeed the other without the slightest warning. One morning shortly after my arrival I was bestowing upon her a friendly caress in order to get properly acquainted, to her evident enjoyment when, of a sudden and without the least warning, she growled and turned on me burying her teeth and claws in my hand.

I was startled and shocked. I could not understand this conduct on the Ashrama. I looked at her in surprise as she crouched a short distance away glaring at me and threshing her tail angrily. I felt the calm, blue eyes of G. riveted upon me with an amused expression. I could see no good reason for his being amused. I was not. I essayed, what I intended to be a benignant look on my new-found enemy, and tried to act the part of one who takes all things, pleasant and otherwise, with philosophic indifference. But within was a malignant surging of the primitive. A picture unfurled before my subjective vision: My enemy and myself had a meeting outside the Ashrama compound, and our differences were then and there settled in red-corpuscled fashion. It did not take long. That cat was reduced to cat-tanmâtras at once; not even a hair was left to indicate that she had ever lived. The picture passed and once more I found myself looking tenderly into ferocious feline eyes. Then I bethought me of a switch which reposed in a convenient place in the dining room, and mentally reached for it with a spasm of pleasure. But that thought followed the other into the void. That switch, by the way, was one in a long series of switches which had been ruined in futile attempts to break the cat of the human trait of thievery. I am of the opinion, based on experience, that the reason that cat was not reformed was because she never felt the switch. The dishes, the table and even the larder itself got the blows intended for the cat. The way she could dodge blows carefully and stealthily aimed from behind suggested the possession of occult powers. Perhaps she was an erstwhile Yogi fallen from grace. When one switch was wrecked, another was got, this time care being taken to get it large enough to make up for past failures in the event of possible successful blow, and yet not so large as to threaten the future usefulness of the crockery. I questioned the existence of that cat on the Ashrama. Then I questioned my own existence there. Perhaps an Ashrama was originally intended for culprits. Who else would need an inclosure?

Within a few days the young man, previously referred to, left for San Francisco, and G. and I were left alone. Life became more concentrated, more incisive and with a breadth commensurate

with the increased depth. This is not said in disparagement of the third party; but is merely a statement of fact which developed in accordance with the psychologic adjustment of energies. The mystery of human relationships will ever remain a mystery. The many but touch in the passing as "ships that pass in the night, bespeak each other in passing, only a look or voice, then darkness again and a silence." The darkness and the silence are one and the event is over. Others may but touch, but the touch is momentous. Light is flashed in the contact and leaves in the passing a lustre which endures to the end. One thereby sees himself the clearer, and his vision becomes truer and deeper. We may not be able to analyse it nor do we want to. We only know that love is there, and we enjoy in silence. If a meeting of this character be but once, or but a few times, the memory were a benediction. Then there are those deeper personal contacts which give to one or both the experience of a sort of subjective luminosity. The very presence of such an one is either a revolutionizing factor in the life of the other, or a fresh impetus directing his course with precision. It is as if the combination of responsive minds directed along spiritual themes reflects a super-poise which is no more the property of one than the other, but which each is conscious of and enters into according to his capacity. It gives mutual understanding even when mental processes are different.

In the aggregate many hours were spent in the meditation cabin, hours of happy association with G., listening to his readings, illuminating comments and to the wisdom of his own deep, resourceful, spiritual life. The sanctity of the Ashrama is associated, to my mind, with three personalities,—Swami Vivekananda, Swami Turiyananda and G. The spiritual character of the place and these tremendous spiritual personalities are co-existent. This association makes the Ashrama a place of pilgrimage for all time, a shrine where the mind identifying itself with the spiritual life may be drawn inward incarnations nearer the goal by the sheer force of the inspiration derived from their personalities. Being there alone with G. brought me into comrady touch with one who it seemed to me lived in the presence of God. The Ashrama, then, became a place where primitive

nature put on a finer raiment; the notes of the lark became veritable songs of joy; the rising and setting sun took on a more ethereal brilliance and conveyed a new message, and all incidents were redeemed from the commonplace by the infilling of a new life. This association also translated in a new light the traditional *Sadhanas* of the spiritual aspirant. Renunciation, which in the times gone by, had been associated with the idea of pain, unveiled and beamed with the face of joy, caressing one with the sense of luxuriant release from old confinements. The strenuous spiritual life hitherto conveying the idea of stern resistance to past rebellious tendencies became quickened into an enthusiasm in the enjoyment of which common indulgences of the old life fell away as incumbrances. "Long-faced" religion was forgotten in the awakening to the present and practical reality of spiritual ideality. It was seen that the force of ideals alone may carry one through the preparatory stages of realisation. But ideals must be invincible; then, and then only, the strenuous tests of discipline will be passed through with enthusiasm. Nay, more: the power of ideals may bear one into transcendental experiences in apparent defiance of all traditional imperatives in mental and bodily discipline. The man whom the world calls a dreamer, immersed in his dream, awakens again, not to the reality of the world, but to the reality of his dream. Those many long walks with G. throbbed with spiritual idealism. We lived on that mystic boundary separating the every-day experiences from the region of dreams. The one was not less real than the other; in fact, it was more real than the other for it endowed the other with an ethereal radiance, transforming it into an experience of enduring reality.—the trysting place of the sages and the secret retreat of God-communion.

The meditation cabin was the heart of the Ashrama. There the mind was tested, its strength, endurance and incisive power determined. There I was reminded that religion and philosophy are but hazy ideas to most students. Our common tendency is to drift along these lines of thought. We feel our way and sleep our way into this and that view and lazily ruminate on the prospect. We have more of intellectual appreciation of spiritual ideals than vital desire to embody such ideals. There is nothing strenuous in our mental action,

nothing alert and incisive in our vision. We lean on props and hobble along as best we may in our infirmity; and strive to cover up our defects, if we be so fortunate as to be aware of them, by posing, dealing in platitudes and playing to the spectacular. Has the aspirant's life been built about figures of speech? Has he been hiding behind sophistries and ethical and moral conceits? What does he really believe, and how does he believe it and why? What is the substance of his faith? Are his ayes and nays determined by some beloved personality, by reverence paid to authority, or by efficient working of his own mind in which extraneous influences and temporary vantage-points are given their proper subordinate place? Can the mind set itself to solve these and many other problems which confront the awakening mind every hour of the day? If so, then the meditation cabin with its broad vistas of spiritual life extending therefrom will become a means to the unfolding of his spiritual possibilities.

Speaking for myself, hours in the meditation cabin were not always devoted to meditation nor, for that matter, even to subjects commonly considered holy. I formally entered, formally to read and to think about things appertaining to God. The very formality of the occasion seemed to challenge the vagaries of ignoble habit. I sat in Padma posture with closed eyes and tried to drive out foreign thoughts. The stillness pounded on the ear-drums and the mind reacted to the battle cry of rebellious tendencies. A myriad voices enticed the mind into the arena of past experience, where it was openly assaulted by old friends, unwelcome friends, whose blandishments were well-nigh irresistible. It was hard to shake old friends even though they call unbidden. They grip one with the force of perpetual obligations. So I found myself driven to appeal to the Lord from their importunities. This is the common experience of all who have given themselves over to spiritual practices. It is the resistance of old habits of thought to new mental processes. The remedy is to strengthen the ideal; that is, to become convinced to the exclusion of all logical rebellion that man is Soul, not body.

(To be concluded).

## VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from page 118.)

यद्योद्धवं तथेदानीमात्मानात्मविवेचनम् ।  
तदुच्यते मया सम्यक् थृत्वात्मन्यवधारय ॥७१॥

71. Now I am going to tell you fully about what you ought to know—the discrimination between the Self and non-Self. Listen to it and decide about it in your mind.

**मज्जास्थिमेदःपलरक्तचर्म-**  
**त्वगाहृयंधातुभिरभिरन्वितम् ।**  
**पादोरुवक्षोभुजपृष्ठमस्तकं-**  
**रङ्गैरुपाङ्गैरुपयुक्तमेतत् ॥७२॥**

72. Composed of the seven ingredients viz., marrow, bones, fat, flesh, blood, skin, and cuticle, and consisting of the following limbs and their parts—legs, thighs the chest, arms, the back, and the head—

**अहंममेति प्रथितं शरीरं**  
**मोहास्पदं स्थूलमितीर्यते बुद्धैः ।**  
**नभोनभस्तद्दहनाम्बुभूमयः**  
**सूक्ष्माणिं भूतानि भवन्ति तानि ॥७३॥**

73. —This body, reputed to be the abode of the infatuation of 'I and mine,' is designated by sages as the gross body. The sky, air, fire, water and earth are subtle elements. They—

*The sky, air etc.—These are the materials out of which the gross body has been formed. They have got two states, one subtle and the other gross.]*

**परस्परांशोर्मिलितानि भूत्वा**  
**स्थूलानि च स्थूलशरीरहेतवः ।**  
**मात्रास्तदीया विषया भवन्ति**  
**शब्दादयः पञ्च सुखाय भोक्तुः ॥७४॥**

74. Being united with parts of one another and becoming gross (they) form the gross body. And their subtle essences

form sense-objects—the groups of five such as sound and the rest which conduce to the happiness of the experiencer, the individual soul.

*[Being united &c.—The process is as follows: Each of the five elements is divided into two parts, one of the two halves is further divided into four parts. Then each gross element is formed by the union of one-half of itself with one-eighth of each of the other four.*

*Subtle essences Tanmātrās.*

*Form sense-objects—by being received by the sense-organs.*

*Sound and the rest—sound, touch, smell, taste and sight.*

*Happiness &c.—Happiness includes its opposite, misery also.]*

**य एषु मूढा विषयेषु वद्धा**  
**रागोरुपाशेन सुदुर्देन ।**  
**आयान्ति तिर्यान्त्यध ऊर्ज्जमुच्चैः**  
**स्वकर्मदूतेन जवेन नीताः ॥७५॥**

75. Those fools who are tied to these sense-objects by the stout cord of attachment, so very difficult to snap, come and depart, up and down, carried amain by the powerful emissary of one's own action.

*[Come and depart &c.—Become subject to birth and death and assume various bodies from those of angels to those of brutes, according to the merits of their work.*

*Powerful emissary &c.—Just as culprit seizing things not belonging to him is put in fetters and sentenced by the royal assar in various ways, so the Jiva, oblivious of his real nature, through his attachment to sense-object is subjected to various kinds of misery.]*

**वद्धादिभिः पञ्चभिरेव पञ्च**  
**पञ्चत्वमापुः स्वगुणेन वद्धाः ।**  
**कुरुक्षमातङ्गपतङ्गमान-**  
**भृद्ग्रा नरं पञ्चभिरञ्चितः किम् ॥७६॥**

76. The deer, the elephant, the moth, the fish and the black-bee—these five have died, being tied to one or other of the five senses viz., sound etc., through their own attachment. What then is in store for man who is attached to all these five!

[ Their own attachment : The word 'guna' in the text means both 'a rope' and 'a tendency.' ]

**दांपेण तीव्रो विषयः कृष्णसर्पविषादपि ।**

**विषं निहन्ति भोक्तारं द्रष्टारं चक्षुषाद्ययम् ॥७७॥**

77. Sense-objects are more virulent in their evil effects than the poison of the cobra even. Poison kills one who takes it, but those others kill one who even looks at them through the eyes.

[ Looks at them.....eyes.—The mention of the eyes here is only typical, and implies the other sense-organs also; contact with the external world by any organ, is intended. ]

**विषयाणामहापाराद्यो विमुक्तः सुदुस्त्यजात् ।**

**स एव कल्पते मुक्त्यै नान्यः पट्टशारुण्येद्यपि ॥७८॥**

78. He who is free from the terrible fetters of the hankering for the sense-objects so very difficult to get rid of, is alone fit for liberation, and none else,—even though he be versed in all the six Shastras.

[ Six Shastras.—The six schools of Indian philosophy are meant. Mere book-learning without the heart's yearning for emancipation will not produce any effect. ]

**आपातवैराग्यवतो मुमुक्षु-**

**भ्ववाद्विषपारं प्रतियातुमुद्यतात् ।**

**आशाब्रह्मो मज्जयतेऽन्तराले**

**निगृह्ण कण्ठे विनिवर्त्य वेगात् ॥७९॥**

79. Those seekers after liberation who have got only an apparent dispassion (Vairāgya) and are trying to cross the ocean of Samsāra (relative existence), the shark of hankering catches the throat and violently snatching away drowns them half-way.

[ Snatching away—from the pursuit of Brahmanana. ]

**विषयाख्यग्रहो येन सुविरक्त्यसिना हतः ।**

**स गच्छति भवास्मोऽयः पारं प्रत्यूहर्वर्जितः ॥८०॥**

80. He who has killed the shark known as sense-object with the sword of mature dispassion, crosses the ocean of Samsāra, free from all obstacles.

[ Dispassion—Vairāgya. ]

**विषमविषयमार्गं गैच्छतोऽनच्छ्रवुखेः**

**प्रतिपदमभिघातो मृत्युरप्येष विद्धि ।**

**हितसुजनगुरुक्त्या गच्छतः स्वस्य युक्त्या**

**प्रभवति फलसिद्धिः सत्यमित्येव विद्धि ॥८१॥**

81. Know that death quickly overtakes the stupid man who walks along the dreadful ways of sense-pleasure, whereas one who walks in accordance with the instructions of a well-wishing and worthy Guru, as also his own reasoning, achieves his end—know this to be true.

**मोक्षस्य काङ्क्षा यदि वै तत्वात्ति**

**त्यजातिदूराद्विषयानन्विषं यथा ।**

**पीयूषवत्सोषदयाक्षमार्जव-**

**प्राणान्तिदान्तीर्भव नित्यमादरात् ॥८२॥**

82. If indeed thou hast a craving for liberation shun sense-objects from a good-distance as you would do poison and always cultivate carefully the nectar-like virtues of contentment, compassion, forgiveness, straight-forwardness, calmness, and self-control.

**अनुकूलं यत्परिहत्य कृत्य-**

**मनाद्यविद्याकृतवन्धमोक्षगाम ।**

**देहः परायाऽयमसुध्य पोषयो**

**यः सज्जते स स्वमनेन हन्ति ॥८३॥**

83. Whoever leaves aside what should always be attempted, viz., the emancipation from the bondage of Ignorance without beginning and passionately seeks to nourish this body—which is an object for others to enjoy—commits suicide thereby.

[ For others to enjoy : to be eaten by dogs and jackals after death. ]

परीरपोषणार्थी सन् य आत्मानं दिहच्छति ।  
ग्राहं दारधियाधृत्वा नदीं तर्तुं स गच्छति ॥८४॥

84. Whoever seeks to realise the Self by devoting himself to the nourishment of the body, proceeds to cross a river by catching hold of a crocodile, mistaking it for a log.

मोह एव महामृत्युर्मुक्षोर्विपुरादिषु ।  
मोहो विनिर्जितो येन स मुक्तिपदमर्हति ॥८५॥

85. So for a seeker after liberation the infatuation over things like the body is a dire death. He who has thoroughly conquered this deserves the state of freedom.

[*Infatuation*.—That I am the body or that the body etc. are mine.]

मोहं जहि महामृत्युं देहदारसुतादिषु ।  
यं जित्वा मुनयो यान्ति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ॥८६॥

86. Conquer the infatuation over things like the body, one's wife and children,—conquering which the sages reach that supreme state of Vishnu.

[*Supreme state of Vishnu*.—From Rig-Veda, I. xxii. 20-21.]

त्वड्मांसरुधिरक्षायुमेदोमज्ञास्यसंकुलम् ।  
पूर्णे मूत्रपुरीषाऽयां स्थूलं निन्द्यमिदं वपुः ॥८७॥

87. This gross body is to be deprecated for it consists of the skin, flesh, blood, arteries and veins, fat, marrow and bones, and full of other offensive things.

(To be continued.)

## STORIES OF SAINTS

### Guru Nanak.

(1)

Guru Nanak has now begun his ministry for distributing his hard-earned jewels of spirituality among the multitude, he taught people who came to him, opened their spiritual eyes. By his flaming words of *Jnana* (knowledge) and renunciation, he awakened spirituality in multitudes of people and by his infallible blessings removed their bondages of Karma. Thus within a short time, a large number of people both Hindus and Mussulmans took refuge under him and sat at his blessed feet discarding their previous lifeless forms of religion. At this the jealousy of the priests—the *Kajis* and *Mullahs*—were roused, and burning for revenge they complained to the then reigning Nabab that Nanak Sahib had given himself out as the true worshipper of the Lord and preaching that both Hindus and Mussulmans were equal in the eyes of God; that these words of his were all make-believe intended to attract the multitude, and that the sincerity of his words would be proved only if he would join us in congregational prayer in the mosque. The Nabab thereupon invited Nanak Sahib to prayer with them in the mosque. Guru Nanak in the

ordinary way went with the Nabab and Kaji to mosque, but when the congregation had stood in a row for sometime, he suddenly left the line and retiring to a corner, sat himself down. When the *Namaz* (the congregational prayer) was finished, people appealing to the Nabab said, "Now see, your Majesty, his hypocrisy has been exposed, he is not willing to join us in prayer although he preaches that Hindus and Mussulmans are equal in the eyes of God." When asked by the Nabab as to the reason of his leaving the prayer, the Guru Sahib said, "Whoever with undivided attention and whole heart prays to the Lord, I am with him in the prayer whether he be a Hindu or Mussulman, but whose mind is wandering and not given to the Lord in the prayer I can never be with him, whoever he may be. Here, what to speak of ordinary beings, neither the Nabab's mind was in the mosque in prayer nor that of the Kaji (the priest), but His Majesty's mind had travelled to Kabul and Kandahar and engaged in buying fine horses for his stabley while the Kaji's mind had gone to his own home and busy in protecting the new-born colt of his mare.

from falling into the well within the stable-compound. Do you call this mockery the prayer of the Lord? Is this His worship or somebody else's? How can I join such prayer? Therefore did I leave the row?" Hearing Nanak utter these true words and astonished at this disclosure of Nanak's power of being in the hearts of men, both the Nawab and Kaji ashamed at finding their thoughts laid bare, and conscious of their sacrilegious guilt, fell at the feet of the Guru Sahib and begged to be taught by him.

## ( 2 )

Guru Nanak, was so full of the true spirit of renunciation and *Vairagya*, that the following story illustrating his burning renunciation and his hatred of all earthly things and hankering after only the true bliss of spirituality, is extant among the *sadhus* of Northern India.

The Guru Sahib was then travelling about as a wandering Fakir, living on food from *bhiksha* and going about from pilgrimage to pilgrimage in the four directions whichever way his holy steps took him courting dangers, difficulties, facing starvation and even death, withal with his heart full of the sweet balm of love for the Lord and reliance on His Divine Providence. He happened to visit the pilgrimage of Hinglaj which is situated at furthest end of India on the borders of Beluchistan, and reached by a most difficultly accessible route. After visiting the holy places he came to a place where he found monks who have become the heads and abbots of big Maths, living in great luxury and ease and possessing hoards of wealth and exciting the admiration and respect of "the multitude" by their power of working miracles which they have acquired. They have also been monks who have forgotten their vows and straggling from the quest of Spirit become immersed in material wealth and with material manifestation of power such as the power of healing deseases and were content with that as their goal in life. When these Mohunts or Abbots saw this young monk with beautiful face lit up with a heavenly glow and his humble mien they were much attracted to him and asked him to take his *bhiksha* (alms) from them. Nanak stood there silent and when they insisted he only said, "I do not want the ordinary *bhiksha* (alms) of food from you." "Then ask for other valued things of the world, or wealth, for posses-

sions, for land, chariots, horses, elephants, for the power of healing and working miracles and we shall grant thy prayer for the asking." Then Nanak with an air of great supplication and with tears in his eyes said, "*Kuch garibi deo maharaj*," which means "Sirs, do grant me a little of the spirit of Poverty." Struck by this anti-climax, between what they were willing profusely to give and what Nanak had asked for so suppliantly, these abbots with their minds bewildered and bated breath looked at each other and wondered who this young man must be and what must be within him which makes him discard with scorn all that man values most and welcome Poverty which everybody runs away from as a priceless treasure; and we with all our wealth and possessions and psychic powers have not the power to grant this little prayer of this begging monk. Then in the holy company of Nanak and through his grace their eyes were opened, how they have fallen from their vows and straggled from the path and become entangled in material possession and were led by the influence of Nanak to discard all wealth and material possession, and go in search of the Lord, the Essence of Spirit, and the Abode of True Bliss and Freedom.

Of the three vows which the monk takes, Poverty, chastity and obedience, he values Poverty above all the wealth and treasures of the world and as zealousy guards it as it were as a pearl of great price.

## BY THE WAY.

## A Notice.

Prof. Pramatha Nath Mukherjee's pamphlet on "Some Thoughts on Education in India" contains original reflections on the subject of Indian Education which are of great value to students of Indian culture and civilisation. During the reconstruction period of human history through which we are passing, this laying bare of the soul of a culture and emphasising the distinctive features, are of singular interest, when the exaggerated claims of certain forms of culture are being brought to their proper light and shade and when there has been a searching of hearts and

appraising of the basic ideals of types of culture unprecedented for a long time, precipitated by the spectacle of a world-war with all its gruesome incidents in the full glare of twentieth-century civilisation. For in the comparison of cultural ideals which are sure to take place, mankind will have to pronounce its verdict on their intrinsic merits.

Two distinct ideals informing two different social and national organisations emerge to view, and the distinctiveness of their informing ideals are so well-marked in some important matters, that they have followed two different courses guiding the destiny of mankind along different channels—we mean the Indian and the European. The object of the Hindu civilisation is to guide the destinies of all who come under its fold to the high table-land of spiritual realisation of the oneness of the Soul with the Brahman the Universal Soul, through the ascending scale of social order in which life is ranged as in a ladder. This has been compassed by a great simplification of the externals of life, the forces of indiscriminate competition has been mitigated by caste system, and the path has been paved for the spiritual realisation of all. The whole force of Hindu society has been to prevent the expenditure of powers and energies in the lower, material planes of existence as little as possible and to conserve it for employment on the higher spiritual planes—so that everybody might finish his *bhoga*, enjoyment, and gather the necessary knowledge and Vairagya and make the march back from the senses and establish his home in the Spiritual Realm and once established there the power and fruition of his energising on all planes will be brought under control. This is what has been styled "Spiritual autonomy" by the writer in the pamphlet. When this is recognised as the ultimate goal in Hindu civilisation, everything forms of a piece with it, its social order, its manner, customs, all fall in their natural place, as feeder strains to the main current.

The author has gone to some lengths and detail in framing what may be called a constitution i. e. planning beforehand a scheme worked out in some detail as to how the education system are to be staffed, managed. We must confess we have great misgivings, of all worked-

out schemes of collective life planned decades ahead, in which all the *minute* of detail are laid out and social life is thereby virtually dictated to a pre-worked-out scheme. But by this we do not mean to exclude consideration of the ideals underlying the institutions of a culture and its bearing with regard to each other, its adjustment to other cultures which surround it as the author has done in the major part of the pamphlet. We do not believe that well-being lies in that; but the true revivalist work confines itself to revealing and intensifying the soul of the people, and leave them to work it out; for it is extremely venturesome to assert, what new forms of expression, what undreamt-of application the revivified soul of a people will find in new environmental conditions. We believe we are fortified in these reflections by the authority of Swami Vivekananda who never cared to build elaborate plans for the future, but revealed the soul of the people and emphasised it with all the force at his command and given their lost individuality, he believed they would stand up in their strength, self-conscious, self-reliant, and taking their destiny in hand, will work out their own salvation. Therefore the first step to be hewn out of the rock of ages, according to him, is to flood the land with spiritual ideas, throw the inestimable jewels of spirituality enshrined in our scriptures and practicalised in the lives of a long succession of religious personages broadcast over the length and breadth of the land. He had the genius to foresee also that nothing will send such galvanic shock of strength through the mass of people, as these spiritual ideals to which they are constitutionally bound to respond energetically.

Before the awakened power of the Spirit of the people all that stands in the way of its self-realisation will vanish without the necessity of our cursing or villifying this particular custom or that. All the precautions then that finds in our author's constitution-making as safeguards against the disruptive influence of an alien culture, will have no meaning then. For the strength of a culture will be enhanced not by the ingenuity, number or rigidity of the barriers which protect it, but its intrinsic, inherent strength which will help it to meet all cultures face to face, and then the revitalised culture may be left to itself to hold its own, and to assimilate and absorb, according to its needs. The

mass of restrictions which gird round our social structure, however necessary as a transitional protective measure, certainly do not argue its strength, but it may be safely surmised that with the accession of strength in the internal organism they will fall away or diminish of themselves. But both the premature pulling down of these or the endeavour to rivet them tighter, or multiplying them with the false hope of giving added strength to the body is equally mischievous and will only tend to weaken it.

What Prof. Mukhopadhyaya says with regard to the principle of education, we find ourselves in full agreement. Education should not merely supply with one a mass of information which he hardly knows how to assimilate, or manage. Before the information is collected, or along with it the mind should pass through a rigorous course of concentration by which the mind should learn how to tackle facts, how to hold them in mind for a long time and compare and think on them. This practice of formal concentration forms an integral and important part of our Hindu system of education, where the Brahmin student practices concentration every day as part of his religious duties. When he has learnt concentration he can collect facts at will and such a trained mind put upon anything will evolve marvellous results out of it.

When the Professor speaks of men and women as playing different roles in life and polarity of man and woman being an expression of the gist of existence, we also agree and no education which does not educate her in the line of her peculiar development and seeks only to approximate her to the state, mentality, qualities of men at the sacrifice of her female qualities is foredoomed to failure, especially in this country. All woman should be educated to the approximation of that noble type of womanhood immortalised in our Epics in the noble character of Sri Sita Devi, great in great reserves of silent power of purity, devotion and self-effacement and the calm dignity born of the infinite power of love and peace and self-sacrifice instinctively commanding the homage of all men.

The author has rightly emphasised the need of Brahmacharya in our educational system, which has always commanded a dictatorial position in our

Hindu system. With the assimilation of Brahmacharya in the system, the almost preponderating dependence on physical food and "nerve-tonics and medicines" for the nourishment strengthening of body and mind will be curtailed enormously, for it is not "bread and butter and milk," so prominently nourish and invigorate the mind and body as Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is the real tonic and nourisher *par excellence* and once established in it even the least food, both in kind and quality will give marvellous results, for then the energy born of food will all be retained, transmuted into thoughts, and employed, as the higher powers, instead of being dissipated as sex-thoughts and imaginings. The consciousness of great "Ojas" and vigour of brain and the release from a predominant dependence upon what is called "good" food, is experienced by all Sadhus and others, who go in for *akhanda* (unbroken) Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya gives great tone to the physical body, releases it greatly from the *dwanya* (duality) of heat and cold, physical pain and pleasure and infinitely enhances its powers of suffering privations and resisting disease. Brahmacharya forms a cornerstone of our culture and it seems possible to revive its basis among large numbers as it is ingrained in our system.

The author shows great depth of thought and ingenuity in exposing some of the basic ideals and general principles underlying the Hindu system of culture, and is replete with reflections which are attractive both by their originality and ingenuity and its nicety of presentment. We could hardly do justice to all the matters discussed in this interesting pamphlet, within the short space of this notice but we have much pleasure in saying that we have both enjoyed and profited by the perusal of this thoughtful article. The place where the author presents his statement of the two plans of adaptation, the indoor and outdoor, of the two types of culture, the introspective and inwardly directed culture (*Antarmukha*) of the East and the objective and outwardly directed (*Bahirmukha*) culture of the West is very fine as it brings out their respective merits. We give the quotation:—

"I may briefly characterise the contrast between the two plans of adaptation—out-door and in-door as I may call them respectively,

The direction of the former plan is indicated by the common formula—adaptation of the self to the environment. Here the main current of energy is allowed to flow outwards: alertness or readiness to react becomes the prime virtue. Thus instead of primarily conserving and developing his own constitutional energy, man allows himself to dissipate in endless reactions against endless external stimuli, misconceiving the importance of such desultory and eccentric exercise. He wrongly thinks that energy can be best developed by such occupation and exercise alone, that energy is a commodity that must be gathered abroad and brought home in the shape of food, fellowship, books, lectures and newspapers; he hardly suspects that every cell—nay, every atom—of his body is a magazine of stored-up energy of incalculable magnitude, indeed a centre where energy considered both in its kinetic and potential forms is simply equal to the *whole* Cosmic Power which this universe is. The nature of the outdoor plan is this: preserve and develop the body by food and “running” exercise, and by straining every nerve to purge the surroundings of the myriads of visible and invisible foes that would bring disease, suffering and death to us, by not only keeping our powder always dry but always exchanging shots with our natural or artificial energies—this indeed is life perpetually on the war-path, a life-long living in the trenches. In grappling with disease for instance it produces its horrible prescriptions of disinfectants, medicines and the so-called preventive measures. The plan of building up the mind is also similar from this point of view. It begins by assuming that the mind is practically a “*tabula rasa*” at the start, and that therefore the gathering of experience, the building up of will and character, is mainly an outdoor business, a matter of accumulating and arranging impressions. The self therefore grows by accretion and epigenesis and not by unfolding and evolution. The correct method is observation, and analysis and not intuition. The will and character again must be formed in the continual putting forth of effort to parry off the blows aimed at us from outside—in the seeking of prey and warding off enemy, to translate the whole affair into biological terms. We are all familiar with the nature and consequences of this plan of life.

The formula of the latter plan of adaptation is the converse of that of the former—adaptation of the environment to the self. The self recognises and is bent upon realizing its own highest potentialities, its ideals; it proceeds to adapt the environments to the needs of this process of self-fulfilment, to conform the outer to the rule and standard of the inner. This shows that it is not a plan of ignoring and neglecting the outer, but that of making it serviceable in the best possible manner to the conservation and concentration of energy within, by which act alone can the potentialities of our nature be realised in a measure worthy of the cost of the attempt. The classical example is what is depicted by Kalidasa: the great god Mahadeva absorbed in deep meditation in his favourite haunt, the mount Kailasa; and Nandi, the rod of authority in hand, conforming Nature, living and non-living, to the tune and repose and depth of his master's great meditation. This is the symbol of spiritual as distinguished from merely animal adaptation. The principal features of this in-door method should be noted thus: (1) Its vital philosophy, viz. that the body is not a mass of inert “particles” governed only by Newton's laws of motion but a mass of centres or stores of energy, partly kinetic but vastly potential, which by the regulation of vital metabolism and sense-activity should be rendered a maximum kinetic force; that the external stimuli should only assist this internal *release* or awakening of power (it should be noted that I am using these terms of dynamical science in somewhat rough senses). Its spiritual philosophy, viz., that the mind of the child far from being a *tabula rasa* or simply a store of vague hereditary disposition, is a centre through which the whole universal stress is operating and overflowing, so that at the back of the poor child's will we have the whole cosmic power given and awaiting—Mahashakti or the Mother of the world Herself. The key to the hidden sources of power, knowledge and happiness is to be found therefore not in outer observation, running exercise and externally directed gratification, but in intuition culminating in *dhyana* and *samadhi* which outer observation may suggest and assist but not distract; in the concentration of the will-power preferably upon internal centres of force culminating in what is technically known in the science of *Yoga* as

*samyama* which motor exercise may assist and safe-guard but not dissipate (e. g., a form of breathing exercise called *pranayama*) ; and in the quieting of the passions, in the subsidence of the distracting shadows or chimeras of pleasures so that the self may fall back upon its own substratum which is love, sweetness and bliss (*prema* and *ananda*), and the external gratification of the self—induced by external causes and referring to external objects—must be such as to tend to this consummation."

## REVIEWS.

*Brahmadarsana or intuition of the Absolute*, being a introduction to the study of Hindu philosophy, by Sri Ananda Acharya. Published by Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London. Size 7 $\frac{1}{4}$  by 5 inches.

This little book embodies a series of lectures delivered in Norway by Sri Ananda Acharya who has been doing Vedanta-propagation work in England. This book represents an attempt to present the ideas and conceptions of Hindu philosophy to the students of Vedanta philosophy in the West. The difficulties besetting one who attempts to render the unfamiliar terms and ideas of Indian philosophy to Western mind in a form to make them acceptable to the religious mind of the West is great ; and the writer is to be congratulated on the apparent ease and attractiveness with which he has succeeded in presenting the abstruse and recondite conclusions and the lines of argument of Hindu philosophies in a terse, luminous and attractive garb. These lectures on some of the deep problems of Indian philosophy are a little scrappy, but they do not pretend to be a systematic treatise ; but we would have been gladder if the author had gone to greater lengths in bringing out some of the essential differences between the conclusions of Indian and Western philosophy and the difference of outlook resulting therefrom ; and we are conscious of the limitations imposed on him by the circumstances in which these lectures were delivered. But as an easy presentation of an array of conclusions and lines of argument of some of the most important problems of the systems of

Indian philosophy, we have no hesitation in saying that these lectures, scrappy and insufficient though they be to some extent, form a good introduction to students of Indian philosophy in the West.

*Life of Ranoji Rao Scindhia* (Founder of the Gwalior State) by Mukund Wamanrao Burway, Judge, Small Cause Court, Indore. Size 5 by 7 inches.

This is a short and well-written life of the famous lieutenant of Baji Raji Peshwa—who built and consolidated the Maharatta empire during the period of decadence of Moghul Empire. The life achievements, exploits and conquests of Baji Rao Peshwa, perhaps one of the greatest personalities of the Maharatta period, second only to Sivaji whom Ranoji Rao served faithfully as a lieutenant in his exploits, is given at some length. In return for his loyal and faithful services, Ranoji Rao had the Jhagir conferred on him by the Peshwa, and he became the founder of the present Gwalior State. The writer has written the lives of the Maharatta heroes appreciatively and he has helped to dispel some aspersions on their character by reference to Indian and European sources. It is interesting to note that as Sri Samarath Ramdas Swami inspired the life and activities of Sivaji, the life of Baji Rao Peshwa was under the inspiring and chastening influence of Sri Brahmendra Swami of Dhawadshi.

*Biochemistry*. Published by J. P. Pandit & Co., Bhutedi, Zampa, Baroda. Price Rs. 2. Size 5 by 8 inches.

This is a book on the new system of treatment started by Dr. Schuster and since taken on by some eminent physicians of America and Europe, the principle of treatment which is called that of tissue remedy is the natural one—that the inorganic cell-salts which along with water and organic matter constitutes the human body, are the real cell, and tissue builder, which use the other constituents for building cells and tissues ; when these cell-salts are deficient disease sets in and the proper treatment is to supply the deficiencies of the cell-salts and help nature to cure herself through the blood by supplying deficiencies. The originators and supporters also claim that the efficiency of drugging like in allopathy with powerful agents or the law of

*similia similibis curantur* in Homœopathy is conditioned greatly by the power of the human organism in building cell-tissues by the inorganic cell-salts and the best way is helping nature by restoring the cell-salts to normal portions. Biochemic system employ only 12 remedies corresponding to the twelve tissue or cell-salts. In this book the application of the twelve remedies to various diseases is given in some detail.

We have no experience of this treatment but the testimonials of Biochemistry appended with this book include from some doctors who claim grand results have been obtained in practice. The price of the remedies is also cheap, one box of 1 oz. powders of the 12 remedies of potency  $3 \times 6 \times 72 \times$  costing Rs. 10 only. J. P. Pandit & Co., Baroda.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

We have received the report of Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal for the month of April 1918. Indoor patients: There were 6 old cases, and 21 new admitted, 15 discharged cured, 4 died, 1 left treatment. Outdoor patients: There were 2260 cases of which 1929 new and 1231 repeated numbers.

Balance of the last month ...	Rs. 5253-10-9
Total Receipts ...	Rs. 347-14-0

Total ...	Rs. 5601-8-9
Total Disbursements ..	610-13-9

Balance in hand Rs. 4990-11-0

The Swami in charge writes to us to say that the income of the Sevashrama has decreased owing to the war and the expenses are rising on account of the high prices prevailing especially of medicine and cloth, and he appeals to the generous public on whose support the Ashrama works to augment its help and encouragement.

THE 83rd Birthday celebration of Bhagaván Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was held in Mercara, Mysore, on Sunday the 7th April 1918 by the members of the Vedanta Society helped by the generous public. The occasion was graced by the presence of His Holiness Swami Nirmalanandaji,

a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.) On the arrival of His Holiness he was greeted by the people who prostrated at his holy feet and after being garlanded drove through the crowded streets to the Omkareshwar Temple Hall where he was put up during his sojourn in Mercara. Till the 11th April when the Swamiji left this place for Travancore to supervise the Mission work that is being done there, the Swamiji held religious discourses both morning and evening which were very illuminating and religious doubts cleared in these class-talks. On the day of celebration a large photo of Sri Ramakrishna was placed in a beautifully decorated mandapam and the Bhajana party started at 8 a. m. with this mandapam from the Central High School Hall. It was a grand sight to see—the centre of attraction being the Swami Nirmalanandaji who walked in front of the mandapam. The progress of procession was very slow owing to the offerings of fruits and flowers with arati-kam along at every step. At about 1 p. m. the party reached to the place of starting. When the procession came to its destination, some three hundred poor 'Narayanas' were provided with food and sumptuously fed. A harikatha recital was made by a Brahmin devotee as an act of devotion. Ca being called upon by Rao Bahadur K. Appayya, Retired Assistant Commissioner who presided on the occasion, Mr. C. M. Rama Rao, B. A., L. T., gave a short discourse on the Life and Teachings of Gurumaharaj. The lecture was, though brief, very clear and impressive, the important points in the Life and Teachings of the world Teacher of the modern age being touched upon at full length. At the earnest request of the audience the Swamiji made a short and impressive speech. The gist of it was that Bhagaván Sri Ramakrishna came to the world to make mankind understand that all religions were so many roads leading to the same goal, that there need not be any quarrel or fight between any two religions. After Swamiji's speech 'mangalarthy' was made, Prasad was distributed and the function came to a close.

We have received the following:—

The Dacca Branch of the Ramkrishna Mission started a Free School in November 1914 with the object of diffusing education among poor and

neglected classes irrespective of caste, creed or colour, so that they may intelligently and honestly earn their livelihood. At first there were only 22 students in the School and an Infant Class was only opened but the number of students has risen to 125 and the standard of the School is at present up to Class IV of the Calcutta University School Curriculum. Much of the education in India has ever been under monastic control which served a two-fold purpose, first in putting before the young the true ideal of education and secondly in moulding their moral and spiritual life. And with this end in view the School has been placed under the conduct of the Brahmachari monastic members of the Mission, and moral and spiritual training have been adapted as a part of the General Curriculum. To provide for the poor classes, whose first need is the earning of their daily bread, the authorities have in mind a plan to open some lines of technical education for giving the boys practical training in agriculture, carpentry and other cottage industries and the like, which remain as yet unattempted, so to say, solely for want of resources. In short, pure national culture is what the School aims at. In the circumstances may not this institution be deserving of the sympathy and patronage of the benevolent and patriotic sons of India?

On the 10th May 1918, there was gathering of some respectable gentlemen of the locality and the guardians and tutors of the students reading in the School on the occasion of its prize distribution ceremony. A report of the School from its start up till now was read and there were some recitations from the classics. The President then gave away the prizes and the meeting dispersed.

THE eighty-third birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Mutt, Vaniyambadi, Madras, on the 19th May 1918 with great *eclat*. The Mutt hall was tastefully decorated and on a specially erected wooden altar was seated a big life-like picture of Sri Ramakrishna. Many *Bhajana* parties arrived, amongst whom was one Panduranga Bhajana party from Barukur, their *Bahavada narthanam* (ecstatic dances) with the procession, of Sri Gurumaharaj's Vimana were much appreciated by the assembled *bhaktas*, for their ecstatic fervour of

devotion. The feeding of the poor was a feature of the occasion and about 1500 poor "narayans" were fed. Students of several school assembled and made devotional recitals before the altar of Sri Ramakrishna, followed by the playing of a Dramatic Act in "Barathakatha" by The Ramakrishna School boys which created an intensely devotional atmosphere among the assembled devotees. Heavy rain for some time hindered the festivities of the occasion. The hall was filled with merchants, landlords, mirasadars and others and secretaries and members of branch societies at Periapet, Ambanpet, Nattarampalli, Mettor and Ambar. Letters were read including one from the Raja of Ramnad wishing the ceremony all success. Mr. Krishnaswamy Iyer B. A. delivered a lecture on Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings, followed by C. Venkataswamy Naidu, the President of the Math. He said that the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna was the re-statement of the old Sanatan Dharma and that he had lived amongst men and demonstrated the possibility of obtaining complete control over oneself and concentrating one's mind on God. There were rejoicings the whole night. With *mangalarathy* and distribution of *prasad*, the proceeding terminated.

We have received the fourth annual report of the Vivekananda Society, Tallamangalam, Cochin. The Society has a Library and Reading Room, a Poor Fund, meetings are organised in which religious, social and philanthropic subjects are discussed. The Society fed poor Nayadus on the last Onam Day, and celebrated the 56th birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda in a fitting manner. We wish the Society all success.

THE monthly report of the R. K. Mission Seva-shrama, Brindaban for the month of April 1918:— Indoor patients: There were 8 old cases and 8 new admitted of which 8 discharged cured, 2 left treatment, 1 died and 5 still under treatment. Outdoor patients: There were 3161 cases of which 677 new and 2484 were their repeated numbers. Summary of accounts: Receipts, subscriptions and Donations etc. Rs. 445-5-0. Expenditure for Seva and Building Fund Rs. 310-14-3.

# Prabuddha Bharata

इति वृत्त जापत



प्राप्य वरान्शिषोधत ।

Katha Upanishad, I. iii. 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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## CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

XV.—Continued.

[ Subjects.—The qualities of men and women in America.—The jealous persecution of bigoted Christians.—Nothing great is accomplished in this world by low cunning.—Reliance on God.—A few words about Nag Mahasaya ]

The topic of his American experiences came up. Swamiji said, "In that country the women are more learned than men. They are all well versed in science and philosophy and that is why they could appreciate and honour me so much. The men are grinding all day at their work with very little leisure to themselves whereas the women by teaching and studying at the schools and colleges have become highly learned. Whichever side you turn your eyes in America you see the power and influence of women."

Disciple.— Well, Sir, did not the bigoted Christians stand in opposition to you?

Swamiji.— Yes, they did. When people began to honour me, then the Pádris

were after me. They spread many slanders about me by publishing them in the newspapers. Some asked me to contradict these slanders in the papers. But I never took the slightest notice of them. It is my firm conviction that no great work is accomplished in this world, by mere low cunning of worldliness; so without paying any heed to these vile slanders, I used to work steadily at my mission. The upshot I used to find, many times, was that my slanderers feeling repentant afterwards would surrender to me and offer apologies by themselves contradicting the slanders in the papers. Sometimes it so happened that learning that I had been invited to a certain house, somebody repeated those slanders to my host;

hearing which he left home locking his door. When I went there to keep the invitation I found it was all silence and nobody was there. Again a few days afterwards, they themselves learning the truth, would feel sorry for their previous conduct and come and accept my discipleship. The fact is, my son, this whole world is full of mean ways of worldliness. Men of real moral courage and discrimination, are they outwitted and deceived by these ways of worldliness? Let the world say what it chooses, I shall tread the path of duty—know this is to be the action of a *Veera*, a hero. Otherwise if one has to attend day and night to what this man says or the other writes no great work is achieved in this world. Do you know this Sanskrit sloka : "Let those who are versed in the ethical codes praise or let them blame, let *Lakshmi*, the goddess of Fortune come or let Her go wherever She wisheth, let death overtake him to-day or after a century, the wise never swerve their steps from the path of rectitude." Let people praise you or blame you, let Fortune smile upon you or frown, let your body fall to-day or after a *Yuga*, see that you do not fall from the path of Truth. How much of tempests and waves one has to weather, before one

reaches the haven of Peace. The greater a man has become, the fiercer ordeal he has to pass through. Their lives have been tested true by the touchstone of practical life and only then they have been acknowledged great by the world. Those who are saint-hearted and cowardly sink the barks near the shore frightened by the raging of waves on the sea. He who is a *Mahaveera*, a Hero, does he ever cast a glance at these? Let come whatever will, I must attain my ideal first—this is Purush-kára, manly endeavour; without such manliness of endeavour a hundred of Divine helps will little avail to banish your inertia.

Disciple—. Is, then, reliance on Divinity a sign of weakness?

Swamiji.— In the Shastras real self-surrender and reliance on God has been indicated as the highest or culmination of human destiny. But in your country now-a-days the way people say, 'Daiva, Daiva,' reliance on Divine dispensation, is a sign of death, the outcome of great cowardliness ; conjuring up a monstrous God and to endeavour to saddle him with all your faults and shortcomings. Have you heard the story Sri Ramakrishna used to tell about, "the sin of killing a cow"?\* In

\* There was a gardener who had laid out a beautiful plot of land with flower-beds and fruit trees, and with beautiful paths winding about within the plot. The gardener was very proud of his garden and took great care and pains to improve and embellish it. Once a cow stealthily entered the enclosure and began to damage and destroy the fruits and trees. Seeing this, the gardener blinded with rage chased it and belaboured it so mercilessly that the cow fell down dead. Seeing the iniquity of his conduct blinded by rage, he was very much disturbed in mind and so when the sin of killing the cow began to enter his mind and find lodgment therein he had recourse to spiritual sophistry and turned it away by saying to himself, 'well, the hand with which I have killed the cow, is but an instrument, its presiding deity is the God Indra, so Indra has really killed the cow I am but the instrument.' When the sin, therefore approached Indra and prepared to attack him, he realised the sophistry of the gardener by which he wanted to pass the sin on to him. In order to teach him a lesson, Indra disguised himself under the form of a Bráhman visitor and entered the garden, where the gardener was working. Seeing him the gardener took him round the place and showed him with pride and joy the beautiful spots and trees and plants of his garden,

the end the gardener had to suffer for the sin of killing the cow. Now-a-days everybody says: "I am acting as I am being ordained by the Lord" and thus throws the burden of both his sins and virtues on the Lord. As if he is himself like the lotus-leaf in the water (untouched by it). If everybody can practically and truly live always in this mood, then he is a Free Soul. But what really happens is, that of the "good" I am the enjoyer, for the "bad" you, God, is responsible—praise be to your divine reliance!! Without the attainment of the fullness of knowledge (Jnana) or Divine Love, such a state of absolute reliance on the Lord does not come. He who is truly and sincerely reliant on the Lord goes beyond all idea of the duality of good and bad—the brightest example of the attainment of this state among us, at the present time, is Nag Mahasaya.

Then the conversation drifted to the subject of Nag Mahasaya and Swamiji began to talk about him. Swamiji said—"Such a devoted bhakta, one does not find a second,—oh, when shall I see him again."

Disciple.— He will soon come to Calcutta to meet you, so our mother (Nag Mahasaya's wife) has written to me.

Swamiji.— Sri Ramakrishna used to compare him to king Janaka. A man with such control over all the senses, what to speak of meeting with a second, one

remarking, "I have laid out this bed, sir, I have planted the other trees." In the course of their round they came upon the place where they found the cow lying dead. Indra shuddered, seeing that, and exclaimed, "What is this! who has committed this heinous sin of killing a cow?" The gardener was dumbfounded and was fumbling for some answer when Indra seeing his embarrassment left his disguise and appearing before him in his own form said, "You hypocrite, the beautiful garden, the trees, plants and the beautiful paths you have planted and laid out, but the sin of killing the cow has been committed by me, according to you. You are not the doer thereof. Humbug! can you escape the effects of your action by sophistry?" Saying this, Indra disappeared. Then the sin came and attacked the mind of the gardener.

never hears of. You must associate with him as much as you can. He is one of Sri Ramakrishna's nearest disciples.

Disciple.— Many in our part of the country call him a madcap. But I have known him to be a Mahapurusha (great soul) since the first day of my meeting him. He loves me very much and I have his fervent blessings.

Swamiji.— You have attained the company of such a Mahapurusha, what more have you to fear about? As an effect of many lives of *tapasya* (austerities) one is blessed with the company of such a Mahapurusha. How does he live in his home?

Disciple.— Sir, there is not much of worldly stir and activity about him. He is always busy in serving the guests who come to his house. Beyond the few rupees the Pal Babus give him he has no other means of subsistence; but his expenses are on a scale equivalent to what one finds in a rich man's household. But he does not spend a fraction of a pice for his own enjoyment, all that expense is for the service of others. Service—service of others—this seems to be the great mission of his life. It sometimes strikes me that perceiving the Atman in all creatures he is busily engrossed in serving the whole world with sameness of vision, without any distinction. In the service of others, he is not conscious even of his body as a body—as if unconscious of

it,—such a tireless activity! Really I doubt sometimes if he has any consciousness of the body. What you, Sir, call the super-conscious state of the mind, perhaps, I suppose, he always lives on that plane.

Swamiji.— Why should not that be?

He was a great object of love of Sri Ramakrishna. In your country of East Bengal, one of Sri Ramakrishna's divine companions has been born in the person of Nag Mahasaya. By his radiance, Eastern Bengal has become effulgent.

### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

**O**F all systems of religion and philosophy the Vedanta is the one *par-excellence* which gives man complete possession of himself. It interposes nothing—neither God, man or angel between himself and the fulfilment of his destiny, and boldly declares that as the past has been his creation he must take the future also in his own hands. The solution of the misery, the pain and pleasure, of good and bad is thus based on adamantine foundations, namely, on himself and on his exertions which are under his control. The common human tendency is never to fasten the blame on oneself, but to seek to shirk it upon somebody else, or failing that to conjure up a hideous caricature of a Fate and make him responsible. By such futile attempts man never succeeds in extricating himself from the danger and difficulties of his situation, but pining or fretting in impotent anguish and rage he only ends by taking himself into deeper depths of bondage and looking where the remedy does not lie he goes round and round a labyrinth of ignorance.

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The Vedanta takes him by the hand and shows him where to look for rectification. It says you have no control of the external because the external as such does not exist. The appearance of the external owes its existence to yourself, and

if there are defects in the external which hurts you if you go to seek for objective remedies you may go on for centuries, you will never succeed in squaring the external to yourself completely. The external evil only will change form and shape and appear under new guises; you may attack the evil in one body, and before you are aware, it has left it and appeared under another manifestation, while you are perhaps only attacking the carcass. So long as the root-cause in the subject is not removed, no amount of external manipulation will avail. It will be trying to move the boat with oars while the anchor has been cast.

So social progress, or national progress, considered comprehensively has not much meaning. It is only a case of going round and round a circle, chasing the evil from place to place. Of course there is much even in this chasing, for it gives us the necessary gymnastics and the necessary experiences which we need for awakening to the Reality. Beyond that, as an exercise or gymnastics of the mind, it has not much objective value. Many of the plans for social reconstruction or for bringing about a better order of things which obtain now find their whole force in the skilfulness of external manipulation of conditions. If war or any social evil

on a great scale is to be weeded out, the real remedy will be found not so much in disarming, or disempowering any military caste which is in the ascendancy, as in supplying the necessary amount of moral or ethical force which will serve as a powerful restraining or ethical factor. The fact that it has been possible to deluge the world with a tide of barbaric force, argues the ascendancy and power of the military caste as much as the bankruptcy of moral and ethical force which has not acted as a deterrent influence.

The Vedanta therefore places the whole emphasis on the subjective side of man. It first clears the ground by showing that the external world *per se*, does not exist, it is wholly conditioned, coloured by your own self. You yourself create the phantoms of worldly realities and then prostrate before them in fear and trembling. It is as the Vedantic simile goes, like mistaking your own hand for a snake in the dark and then trying to run away from it in fright. Nothing has power to affect the Infinite Soul or Atman of man until he himself forgets his own glory and his own independence and surrenders his birthright of independence to the creatures of his own phantasy. It is the vibration of his own mind, the playing and working of his own imagination and phantasy which creates scene after scene before him by which he is overpowered and obsessed by turns.

So Vedanta says no amount of external remedies and measures of reform will avail to cure the ills of life or the defects of civilisation. It will be as futile as trying to control the shadows while the substance is moving. This idea of the futility of objective remedies is well ex-

pressed in the Upanishads in the Yajna-valkya—Matreyi Sambad in the following words: "Now, when the drum is being beaten, the external sounds are incapable of being controlled but the sound is controlled when the drum or the beater of the drum is seized." "Just as when the conch is blown, the external sound is incapable of being controlled, but the sound is controlled when the conch or the blower is seized." "Just as the sound of a lute being played, the sound is incapable of being controlled, but the sound is controlled if the lute or the player is seized."

Therefore the remedy is to make the subject strong, not strong in aggressive assertion, strong in 'redemptive self-sacrifice.' How to make the subject strong? "By attuning it to the Infinite"—as Swami Vivekananda says. Standing on the naked glory of the Atman of man, the birthless, the deathless, the Immortal, before whose Glory the whole Universe with its myriads of systems are but a drop in the Ocean of Existence, established in Its transcendent glory, all the sufferings and tribulations may come, but they will dash fruitlessly against this rock-foundation. The strength which seeks to prove itself by triumphing over and putting down others, only stultifies itself. The strength which is born of the consciousness of the Self of Man is placed far above the flimsy confidence which arises out of crossing swords with rival opponents and overpowering them. It is more positive, its fountain is within, its flow is perennial, and is not dependent on external circumstances. It is the shining forth of the native power of the soul and not the consciousness of strength arising out of a clash of powers. It does not seek to protect itself by an ever-ready

preparedness to meet and overthrow opponents, but it is sufficiently self-conscious and established in its own poise as not to feel the necessity of reacting to every outside stimuli. It is established in its own strength and glory, it looks with unconcern upon all the passing trivialities of life, however big they may appear to ordinary individuals. There is no place for revenge or retaliation in its own category, but the consciousness of its own inherent strength makes it overlook all the waves of Maya that may beat upon its rock-foundation. Even if it resists evil, it is not propelled by passion or animus, it is only for setting right a violated moral law for the good of

the world without any venom or bitterness behind it, all the while retaining its own calmness and poise undisturbed.

Suffering, then, in the sense of denying all outside evil by the consciousness of inherent strength based on the Self is thus a higher manifestation of soul-force, than all out-going reaction to evil. Every out-going action implies a susceptibility to external influences, which leads us to assume weakness or defect in the subject, which necessitates an ever-ready, preparedness to fight all foes, internal or external, disbalancing the subject still further.

### THE IMMANENT BRAHMAN.

**V**ERY often it is mistakenly supposed that the Vedanta philosophy is looking beyond the present life of man and centres the whole hope and aspiration of man in the realisation and attainment of a future state of existence. This supposition is thoroughly based on a misconception which we shall attempt to prove in this article. Not only does it not look forward to a future state of existence as the culmination of human destiny, but the aspirant in Vedanta renounces from the start all hopes and fears, all lives here and hereafter, all heavens and hells, as being too low and vulgar for human endeavour and insists on seeing the Truth face to face and being one with it even now in this life without waiting for a future existence.

What then becomes of the Vedantic statement that the whole world is a dream, an unreality, a Maya? In what sense are we then to understand it? If the whole world is

a fiction of Maya, an unsubstantial shadow; then certainly the *summum bonum*, according to Vedanta must be to renounce and fly away from it, and the attainment of human destiny will be found in a state of existence other than this. But it is not in that sense that Vedanta means to deny this our present world of the senses. The forms and objects of our sensible world are not absolutely unreal, but are mistaken readings of an underlying Truth. Ordinarily ignorance assumes that every object has a separate and independent reality which subsists apart from everything else and will last even if everything else is annihilated; this overlooks the patent fact of the inter-relatedness and dependence of all objects around us. This constitutes the matrix of ignorance, each object, being taken as a separate individuality, we enter into diverse relations with one another and with the objects, all based on the false standpoint of distinct and

separate units. As this relation becomes complicated with the mingling of different *upadhis* (limiting adjuncts) the underlying Truth and Unity is forgotten and we wholly manufacture a fictitious world of egoism, with separate interests, separate desires.

To know that nothing has a separate name or form apart from the Brahman is knowledge. Brahman is the one substance and objects are styled differently, because they are regarded as otherwise through ignorance. Just as in the well-known example in Vedanta a rope is regarded as a snake, different from the rope, just as the earthen vessel is regarded as a distinct object separate from the underlying clay from which it is formed and styled as a pot or jar, but when the real nature of the clay is known the idea of pots and jars as separate existences vanishes, so when the underlying Brahman is perceived, all the iron-bound distinctions of diverse objects of our sensible world melt into the conception of a homogeneous whole.

When the underlying unity is perceived, all the motions and actions of normal human life will continue, only they will be placed on rational foundations. Everything in this relative world of becoming will remain, and will stand explained in the light of the highest generalisation, the Brahman, the underlying Truth, just as when the first principle of conduct is known and apprehended, all the subsidiary actions will flow as natural corolaries and form a consistent and coherent whole, each standing in its proper place and relation. And no passing gust of emotion or passion will be able to carry us off our feet, but will be judged and appraised and tested by the touchstone of the First principle. Just as to a man who has lost his

bearings of directions, all paths and by-ways appear a confused jumble, unrelated to one another, but when again he has fixed his bearings they form a coherent and well-mapped-out plan of directions, so, all the forms of the relative existence will remain but they will be strengthened by the apprehension of the unit existence behind, as the particular is known only when it is referred to the Universal and General. Therefore the Vedanta does not destroy the relative world of existence, it only explains it by referring it to the primal and ultimate substance, the Brahman. It does not destroy our personality or individuality but explains it by referring to the Unit impersonal principle of which all personalities are different moulds, and in which they are all one, so that they are suffused with a new direction, an added significance; instead of warring, separate, individualities, we become harmonious units of a homogeneous whole. Without the Unity behind, the diversity of forms, cannot remain. If they remain, they will remain as separate, independent entities and will be the cause of delusion and ignorance to us; for whichever object or person we approach except as Brahman or a form of Brahman at once throws a delusion over us, hurts us, and takes us into bondage. "Him the Brahman conquers who thinks the Brahman to be separate from the Brahman, him the Kshatriya conquers who thinks the Kshatriya separate from the Brahman, all beings conquer him who thinks all beings separate from Brahman." But if the apprehension of the forms does not bar from my view the knowledge of the generalised unity, if the knowledge of the jar, or pot does not hide from me the knowledge of the underlying clay behind, then these visions of manifold objects, which the sensible world presents

me with, will never cause any delusion to me, will never cause any aversion or attachment to me. For what cause aversion or attachment? It is through the knowledge that things are separate from me, that I am repelled or infatuated by them. But can I have repulsion for myself, can I have infatuation for myself? But when the same Brahman is apprehended as running through the whole series of its manifestations, nothing is thought to have any separate existence from it, then we are said to be established in knowledge. Such a man is invincible and unvanquishable. Nothing has power to cast any shadow of delusion over him, he will pass through the seventh hell unscathed.

In the depths of misery, in the highest elation of prosperity, he is same sighted and even-balanced, because he perceives the Soul first, last and always. It is the Soul, the Brahman first, which becomes coloured by the Maya of good or evil, happiness or misery. All garbs or forms in which the objects of the world masquerade and appear before us as different entities frightening or alluring us, their masks will be torn, their real nature having been known, their basal substance apprehended; for all the powerful spell with which they work on us arises from our regarding them as different from the underlying oneness of the Brahman.

To such a one, all going and coming is meaningless. Where can he go? Where is the place which the Brahman has not already filled? So long as one says here the Lord exists, and here not, he has missed the basal truth, his delusion has not vanished, he is talking like one yet overpowered by sleep. But when in all objects and actions, the same Brahman is apprehended, and when this apprehension has become so powerful as to have taken

complete possession of him, and has grown in such volume and strength as almost to obliterate all distinctions and separateness so that the iron bounds which separated objects previously have been attenuated to thin filmy partitions, and the unit ocean of existence is seen as embracing everything in its sweep, it is then that one is established in knowledge. To him, "here and hereafter" are meaningless jargon, for he is living, moving and has his being in the Truth always and forever, for he finds the same Brahman present everywhere as in the lowest hell as in the highest heaven. One who has reached such a pinnacle of knowledge, the Sruti says, at the time of his body falling, his *prana* does not travel to any *loka* (sphere of existence) however high and spiritual, as in the case of other worshippers of limited aspects of Brahman but his *upadhis*, (his physical and mental adjunets) fall off and his spirit merges in the Universal Spirit, in which he had ever been living. "न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति. इहैव समविलीयन्ते।" He is not a piecemeal worshipper of a Khandha (broken) aspect of Brahman, but he worships God in spirit and in truth. The limited is material, the spirit alone is infinite and his worship is worshipping the Infinite as infinite. His wide sweep embraces all spheres of existences from the lowest hell to the seventh heaven, all order of beings, all ranges of time and space and all kinds of works, for he finds them all one in the Brahman, the nearest of the near, his own soul. To see, move and live in this Truth, here, even now, without waiting for a future existence is according to the Vedanta, the highest destiny of man.



## EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

( CXXXVII—concluded )

I am really struck with wonder to see—the women here. How gracious the Divine Mother is on them! Most wonderful women, these! They are about to corner the men, who have been nearly worsted in this competition. It is all through Thy grace, O Mother! \* \* I shall not rest till I root out this distinction of sex. Is there any sex-distinction in the Atman? Out with the differentiation between man and woman—all is Atman! Give up the identification with the body, and stand up! Say, “अस्ति, अस्ति” “Everything is!”—cherish positive thoughts. By dwelling too much upon “नास्ति, नास्ति”—“It is not! It is not!” (negativism), the whole country is going to ruin! “सोऽहं, सोऽहं, शिवोऽहं”—“I am He! I am He! I am Shiva!” What a botheration! In every soul is infinite strength; and should you turn yourselves into cats and dogs by harbouring negative thoughts? Who dares to preach negativism? Whom do you call weak and powerless? “शिवोऽहं, शिवोऽहं”—“I am Shiva! I am Shiva!” I feel as if a thunderbolt strikes me on the head when I hear people dwell on negative thoughts. That sort of self-deprecating attitude is another name for disease—do you call that humility? It is vanity in disguise! “न लिङ्गं धर्मकारणं, समसा सर्वभूतेषु एतम्बुद्ध्यं लक्षणं”—“The external badge does not confer spirituality. It is same sightedness to all beings which is the test of a liberated soul.” “अस्ति अस्ति, सोऽहं सोऽहं, चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहं”—“I am He!” “I am Shiva, of the essence of Knowledge and Bliss!” “निर्गच्छति अग्न्यालात्प्रवृत्तिरादिव केशारी”—“He frees himself from the meshes of this world as a lion from its cage!” “नायमात्मा बलदीनेन जन्म्यत”—“This Atman is not accessible to the weak.” \* \* Hurl yourselves on the world like an avalanche—let the world crack in twain under

your weight! Hara! Hara! Mahadeva! “उद्दरेदात्मनामानम्”—“One must save the self by his own self—by personal prowess.”

\* \* Will such a day come when this life will go for the sake of other's good? The world is not a child's play,—and great men are those who build highways for others with their heart's blood. This has been taking place through eternity, that one builds a bridge by laying down his own body and thousands of others cross the river through its help. “एवमस्तु, एवमस्तु, शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहं”—“Be it so! Be it so! I am Shiva! I am Shiva!” \* \*

It is a welcome news that Madras is in a stir.

Were you not going to start a paper or something of that sort, what about that? We must mix with all, and alienate none. All the powers of good against all the powers of evil—this is what we want. Do not insist upon everybody's believing in our Guru. \* \* You shall have to edit a magazine, half Bengali and half Hindi—and, if possible, another in English. \* \* It won't do to be roaming aimlessly. Wherever you go, you must start a permanent preaching centre. Then only will people begin to change. I am writing a book. As soon as it is finished, I run for home! \* \* Always remember that Sri Ramakrishna came for the good of the world—not for name or fame. *Spread only what he came to teach. Never mind for his name—it will spread of itself.* Directly you insist on everybody's accepting your Guru, you will be creating a sect, and everything will come to the ground,—so beware! Have a kind word for all—it spoils work to show temper. Let people say whatever they like, stick to your own convictions, and rest assured, the world will be at your feet. They say, ‘Have faith in this fellow or that fellow,’

but I say, 'Have faith in yourself first,' that's the way. Have faith in yourself—all power is in you,—be conscious and bring it out. Say, 'I can do everything.' "Even the poison of a snake is powerless if you can firmly deny it." Beware! No saying 'nay,' No negative thoughts! Say, 'Yea, yea,' 'तोऽहं सोऽहं'—'I am He! I am He!'

किन्नाम रेदिषि सखे त्वयि सर्वशक्तिः  
आमन्नवस्त्र भगवत् भगदं स्वस्यम्।  
ब्रैलोक्यमेतदस्तिं तत्र पादमूले  
आत्मैव हि प्रभवते न जडः कदाचित् ॥

"What makes you weep, my friend? In you is all power. Summon up your all powerful nature, O mighty one, and this whole universe will lie at your feet. It is the Self alone that predominates, and not matter."

To work with undaunted energy! What fear! Who is powerful enough to thwart you! कुर्मेस्तारकचर्यणं चिभुवनभूष्णादव्यामः बलात् कि भी न विजानस्यस्मात्, रामकृष्णादासात् वयम्—We shall crush the stars to atoms, and unhinge the universe. Don't you know who we are? We are the servants of Sri Ramakrishna. Fear! Whom to fear, forsooth!

स्म दीनाः सक्तह्याः जल्पन्ति मृदा जनाः  
नास्तिक्षयन्त्वदन्तु अहम् देहात्मवादातुराः ।  
प्राप्ताः स्म दीरा गतभया अमयं प्रतिष्ठां यदा  
आस्तिक्षयन्त्वदन्तु चिनुमः रामकृष्णादासात् वयम् ॥

वीत्वा वीत्वा परमपृथं वीतसंसाररागाः  
हित्वा हित्वा सकलकलहप्रापिनीं स्वार्थसिद्धिं ।  
ध्यात्वा ध्यात्वा शुरुवपदं सर्वकल्पाण्यरूपं  
नस्ता नस्ता सकलभूवतनम् पातुमामवामाः ॥

प्राप्तं यदौ स्वनादिनिधनं देवोदधिं मायित्वा  
दम्भं अस्य प्रकरणे हरिहरज्ञादिदेवैर्ले ।  
पृष्ठं वज्रं प्राणासौभौमनात्ययणानं  
रामकृष्णास्ततुं धर्मे तत्पूर्णपात्रमिदं भोः ॥

—"It is those foolish people who identify themselves with their bodies, and piteously cry 'we are weak, we are low.' All this is atheism. Now that we have attained the state beyond fear, we shall have no more fear and become heroes. This indeed is theism which we will choose, the servants of Sri Ramakrishna,

"Giving up the attachment for the world and drinking constantly the supreme nectar of immortality, for ever discarding that self-seeking spirit which is the mother of all dissension, and ever meditating on the blessed feet of our Guru which is the embodiment of all well-being, with repeated salutations we invite the whole world to participate in drinking the nectar.

"That nectar which has been obtained by churning the infinite ocean of the Vedas, into which Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and the other gods have poured their strength, which is charged with the life-essence of the Avatars—Gods (Incarnate on earth)—Sri Ramakrishna holds that nectar in his person, in its fullest measure!"

We must work among the English-educated young men. "त्यगमेकेन अशूतत्वमानशुः"—"Through renunciation alone they attained immortality." Renunciation!— Renunciation!— you must preach this above everything else. There will be no spiritual strength unless one renounces the world. \* \*

Why are — suffering so much? It is owing to their negative, their self-abasing spirit. Tell them to brush aside their illness by mental strength and in an hour it will disappear! I the Atman smitten by disease? Off with it! Tell them to meditate for an hour at stretch, "I am the Atman, how can I be affected by disease!"—and everything will vanish. Think all of you that you are the infinitely powerful Atman, and see what strength comes out. \* \* Self-deprecating! What is it for! I am the child of the infinite, the all-powerful Divine Mother. What means disease, or fear, or want, to me? Stamp out the negative spirit as if it were a pestilence, and it will conduce to your welfare in every way. No negative, all positive, affirmative. I am, God is, everything is in me. I will manifest health, purity, knowledge, whatever I want. Well, these foreign people could grasp my teachings and you are suffering from illness

owing to your negative spirit! Who says you are ill—what is disease to you? Brush it aside! \* \* “वीर्यतासि धीरं, ब्रह्मतां वलं, भूजोऽसि ज्ञातो, स होऽसि स हो मर्य धर्हि”—“Thou art Energy, impart energy unto me. Thou art Strength, impart strength unto me. Thou art Spiritual-ity, impart spirituality unto me. Thou art Fortitude, impart fortitude unto me!” The ceremony of steadyng one's seat (*Asana-pratisthā*) that you perform everyday when you sit down to worship the Lord—“आत्मानमच्छिद्धं पापयेत्”

—“One must think of himself as strong and invulnerable” and so forth—what does it all mean? Say, “Everything is in me and I can manifest it at will.” Repeat to yourself that such and such are Atman, that they are infinite, and how can they have any disease? Repeat this an hour or so, on a few successive days, and all disease and trouble will vanish into nought.

Yours ever,  
Vivekananda.

### STORIES OF SAINTS.

#### I.

**T**HE true saintly character is a priceless possession. It is as soft as it is strong. The sight of misery and suffering falling upon people moves it to an overflow of tender passion, yet it is so strong on occasions that a thousand sledge-hammer blows of adversity leave it unaffected.

A Sadhu was once bathing in the Ganges. The waters of the river having risen in high floods owing to heavy rains falling in the rainy monsoon, the waves were carrying away a scorpion which had accidentally slipped into the current. Seeing the helpless condition of the scorpion, fearing that it might loose its life, the Sadhu who was bathing, was moved to pity and descending into the waters, rescued it and helped it to the land. While he was rescuing it, the scorpion stung him sharply on the hand. Pained by the vicious bite of the creature the Sadhu patiently suffered and hastened to finish the bath, when again he found the scorpion had fallen into the waters, being carried away by the waves. Moved to instant compassion, despite the sharp pain on the hand, the Sadhu descended into the waters, and brought it to the land, when he was again viciously stung by the animal. When it had happened again and again, the thought arose in his mind, that I

should not save it another time, as the excruciating pain of its successive stings is giving me death-agonies. At once his *viveka* ( discrimination ) was awakened, and began to reproach him with these words, “Your action in declining to save does not be-fit thee. It is not worthy of your Sadhu nature. Learn from the scorpion and take a lesson from his actions. You helped him time and again, you saved his life, still he did not give up his vicious nature, but in re-turn for your services he stung you repeatedly according to his own low and vile nature; how can you then, O Sadhu, give up your own noble nature as a Sadhu and refuse to render help and succour to one in distress, simply because he is acting wickedly propelled by his own wicked nature. In spite of hundred faults and acts of ingratitude and harm, cease not from helping and serving others.

#### II.

The great Persian Sufi saint Bayezid once in the dead of night coming out of his room, found the whole town steeped in silence, and no stir or human movement about but all hushed in the deep silence of the night and the full moon was flooding the whole place about with its silver rays and the stars keeping their silent vigils in the sky. In that hushed silence of the night he set out

from his home and enjoying the surpassing beauty of nature around, he silently made his way across the open field to the other side of forests for passing the night in meditations and prayer and thoughts of the Lord. Then the supreme indifference of mankind in general who were all wasting such a heavenly hour of calm, peace and beauty in mere animal sleep and not turning their thoughts to God arose in his mind and pained by the thought he inwardly spoke, "O Lord, in the holy shrine of your Presence, there is such a scarcity of real lovers of God, that few attend it in such an hour of enchantment and surpassing beauty. In such a heavenly moonlit night of peace,

holiness and joy, none turn their thoughts to Thee, Thy praise, worship and contemplation of thy glory." Then the *akashbani* (heavenly voice) was heard "Not any and everybody, my son, can enter the holy shrine of My Thoughts; those who are rolling in luxurious beds, the idle, lazy, addicted to sleep, for them the doors of My Holy shrine are closed. But those who are vigilant, who have watched and prayed and been waiting for my Presence for long years, who have kept many a long vigil, one among a hundred of such enters the Inner sanctuary of my Presence."

### SHANTI ASHRAMA DAYS.

(BY A WESTERN DISCIPLE.)

*(Concluded from page 134)*

**D**THER and objective obstacles were encountered in the meditation cabin. During the preliminary readings my attention was distracted by swarms of all breeds of flies, gnats and stinging insects. Occasionally a noisy wasp would become dangerously friendly, encircling the room at lightning speed, drawing nearer and nearer to my face with each revolution. At the conclusion of one such performance by a particularly large, rasping-voiced wasp, being unable to disturb my apparent composure, he alit at a safe distance as if to inspect me a moment. Then he made a vicious dart straight at my face, but veered off just as the impact seemed inevitable; then described innumerable revolutions around my head, passing directly in front of my eyes. I was determined not to show fear and nerved myself to take the sting which seemed sure to come sooner or later. I passed through the ordeal unharmed, however, and am now in a position to give advice on how to act when a wasp singles you out for his favours. But the worst was yet to come: When the reading was over and we settled ourselves for meditation, all the flies in the room took advantage of my helplessness and disported themselves

without mercy on the sensitive portions of my face. It was intolerable. I stole a surreptitious glance at G. to see how he was making out under the circumstances. He did not seem to be as interesting to the flies as I. I noticed, however, that a few flies were on his face, but apparently he knew nothing about it for there was not the slightest twitching of his face to indicate that anything disturbed him. I felt ashamed of my susceptibility to such trifles, and set to work to play the stoic. The effort terminated as other attempts along that line: I simply could not stand the internal irritation with composure. In the long run, however, there were some valuable moments.

Considerable time was devoted to exploring the Ashrama, ferreting out its secret places and locating its boundaries. In these silent walks I approached the Ashrama's solitude as a lover his beloved. Pleasant and profitable hours were spent in this way. The Santa Ysabele creek-bed had a peculiar fascination for me. During the winter months a surging torrent, its dry and rocky course was now bleaching in a tropic heat, the home of snakes and darting lizards. The breath of the desert was there. The shadiest places on the

Ashrama were along its bank for it was fringed with oaks, pines and willows, and was further shaded by precipitous hills; and here and there minerature valleys led away into inviting retreats.

The open-minded buoyancy of childhood attended me on those rambles. Thought was free, dissolving into dreams, long day-dreams, only to emerge into thought. Thought was the stuff dreams were made of; and dreams gave color and ideal consistency to thought. I dreamed of the great world I had left behind, a mere tradition lying far away beyond the mountains. I wondered why it was necessary to leave the city for the silence of the Ashrama, which, when one got used to it, held within its comparative silence as many obstacles to meditation as the city. I saw silence to be subjective, and hence that one could be as silent in the midst of the commonplace grind of life as on the Ashrama. Obstacles to meditation exist in the mind only. All ideas of religious theory and practice, however true, may be heard millions of times, but until one actually discovers them within his own definite experience they amount to a little more than froth of words. For this very reason Swami Vivekananda at all times insisted that the aspirant should strive to explore his own spiritual depth.

So for the time being the Ashrama suggested by contrast to my years of city life the idea of solitude. Undoubtedly the lapse of time, had I remained there long enough, would have set the mind's power of spiritual idealizing to weaving dreams of humble service amidst the care-strained faces of the city. The Ashrama's vistas of blue, hazy distances and near-by umbrageous nooks would become meaningless, in time, as compared to the surge of human life on a busy thoroughfare; and querulous jays, the song of the lark and the snappy yelp of the coyote would be no more significant than the rattling jolt of a garbage cart on cobbled streets. It is all a question of mood, or temperament. One order of life is, really, no better than another so long as the interior mind is awake to the presence of God. G. so often said, "For the life of me, I cannot see that one vocation is better than another. A Sanskrit pundit is no better than a hod-carrier if his thoughts are not inwardly on God." So the Ashrama life was significant only in so far as it

afforded stimuli which aroused the mind, to thoughts of God and the spiritual life.

I woooed the myths only to see them dissolve in their golden sheen. Especially did I dream of the Hindu myths. I thought of the youthful fluteist, Krishna, luring the love-inebriated Gopis from their dream of worldly duties to the dream of voluptuous ecstasy in the mad swirl of which consciousness rose to supersensuous heights. As I dreamed of the beautiful flute player, I felt the interior working of the *Janmadrds* of the myths, the myriad virtues of the gods,—such virtues as purity, sweetness, buoyancy etc. The flute became an instrument, not of sensuous melody luring the Gopis to their ruin, but of ethereal strains whose vibrations were the waves of regeneration, the flood-tide bearing them into Sattvic consciousness. Then the rationalistic mind of me rose to the surface and questioned the practice of dances in the name of the Lord; that is, as a means to heighten spiritual enthusiasm. Then it pondered the significance of the myth and saw that the great truth illuminating the story was that the touch of the Lord at once liberates from sensuous attachment even while one is apparently submerged in a flood of seductive emotions. The liberating touchstone is the previously acquired love of the Lord, a love which has become the dominant passion of life; and pursuant to which all actions are entered into or, rather, permitted to continue along habitual lines as a safety-valve for excessive energies. In the *Lilas* spiritual spontaneity is the imperative condition if disaster is to be avoided, for he who sways but to melody puts himself in the position to receive the subtle elements of the melody, whatever they may happen to be. They enter into his mind functionings temporarily determining his conduct. Dancing upon advice is like "entering the silence" upon advice. One must find himself first, and he may be accounted lucky if he finds himself alive instead of clinging like a parasite to the outer edge of some precept.

To my mind at that time the Ashrama's wild notes had a peculiar charm, a quieting and soothing effect akin to that experienced when taut nerves relax to the sensuous caressing of favourite melodies. The song of the lark, the noisy jays, the hammering of wood-peckers, the soft whistling of quail in near-by canyons, the barking of coyotes

and the wind playing through the trees, shrieking about the meditation cabin, or furiously assaulting tents, causing the guy-ropes to strain in resistance as their slack was taken up first on one side and then on the other,—all these sounds were as so many pieces in a universal orchestra, arousing the mind to thoughts of that Presence in which they all unknowingly lived their day.

Not all moments, be it understood, were alert to thoughts of God. This surface and audible wild life was too sweet, too unreservedly hospitable, to be ignored for its own sake. Lying prone on the ground in the afternoon shade of some oak, listening to the blending of wild notes and weaving figures from the myriad leaves silhouetted against the sky, my body relaxed in the enjoyment of shameless, luxuriant loafing. But before the siesta was over I was usually reminded that "knee-deep-in June" rest was not what I was in search of, but rather, consciousness which is soul-deep, poised in supersense.

One very warm afternoon while leisurely sipping our lemonade, we had a talk. I think I grew argumentative in my endeavour to place certain philosophical vagaries where they belonged. Now philosophy at its best derives its life, its vitality, its glory, from such as have passed beyond its scope. It trails ever in the wake of the illuminated consciousness. To the spiritual aspirant a philosophical temperament is a valuable asset, truly, if it be kept subordinate to the desire *to be spiritual*; for it acts as a sort of clearing process for the mind, removing thought-crudities and levelling old ruts thus giving balance to the emotional energies searching for God. But like other excellent proficiencies, when indulged for its own sake, it amounts to idleness or worse, as when playing with it in over-confidence, one becomes befuddled by his own caprice. A product of this state of mind aroused my active criticism. It was the idea that, for all we actually know, there may be progress beyond time and space. Whenever a conclusion so ably established as to admit of no shadow of doubt is suddenly set aside and the process of reasoning by which it was determined substituted in its place, as in the present instance, it is an infallible sign that the offending brain is in tragic need of a prolonged vacation. A change of

work might do, say ditch-digging, to give tone and sanity to the system.

Confidentially, I never was afflicted with that sort of thing; but for other ailments I found work beneficial. I chopped wood. I will not say how much I chopped,—there is no use in being too confidential,—but I can honestly say that I did chop wood, and right here on the Ashrama. Other work also did I do. I carried water from a spring hidden away in a secluded ravine about half a mile distant from the meditation cabin to irrigate some domestic shade trees which had been planted with the idea in view of beautifying the Ashrama. Also I followed G. one day assisting him in repairing stovepipes. He knew altogether too much about repairing stovepipes, or, for that matter, the repairing of anything else. He did not overlook a single detail. I know this positively for, I thought, on the completion of each step in the work that that surely was the end of the trouble. But not so. He just kept on and on until the imagination was brought into play to invent defects for I could by no means discern any. Of course I did not mind this in the least. I was ready for anything by way of diversion, and besides I was interested in the refinements of finish which a meditative mind could bestow on a common task. So having had experience I am in a position to recommend hard work for others.

It sometimes happens that one given to much talking talks to no purpose, and is promptly set right by his superiors. On one such occasion I was arrested in my flow of eloquence by the stern voice of G. which, however, was strangely at variance with the friendly gleam in his eyes. "Did it ever occur to you," he said, "that you came here to think, not to talk? This eternal effort to explain everything in the universe is a waste of time. You have read and studied and listened to lectures and talked and talked. You have had enough of that sort of thing. Now is the time to keep quiet, to think, to meditate. Try to get close to Mother. Try to live a quiet, deep, holy life."

Although we discussed *pro* and *con* the various philosophical theories, such as Advaita, Visishtádvaita, Karma, Reincarnation, Spiritualism etc., G. would invariably conclude by reminding me that religion did not consist in theorizing, however

ably, but putting into practice in our daily lives the spiritual truths which we really believe. We all know that much speculation leads to confusion to any mind. Take the Advaita for instance : It is a soul-stirring philosophy, but its realisation awaits the dissolving of all out-going mental life. The practical significance of the Advaita in daily life lies in its power to make people ethical and moral ; and it gives to the individual a perspective on his own mind-functioning, enabling him to view his own personality with as much aloofness as he would another's. But many bright minds have gone wrong in playing with the Advaita as an abstraction. Again, consider the theory of Karma : However interesting and satisfying to the speculative mind, it really solves no vital problem. It ever coils away into the abysmal depths of mystery, leaving one guessing as to the next move. And so on all along the line. Mere theories lead one nowhere.

So during my Ashrama days G. drove the lesson home to me by precept, exhortation and constant example that the one supremely important thing to do was to take hold of religion at one's fingertips, training the mind and body to do all daily actions with alertness and precision, and to associate such actions with the spiritual truths which one firmly believes to be true. Different places on the Ashrama became associated with different sayings of G. On the first day after my arrival while we were at breakfast he struck the note which he carried with variations through all his talks during my stay. Speaking about the foundation of the spiritual life he said : "We must first be *men* before we can be gods. We must stand up and look the world in the face. We must have character. I do not believe in a spiritual life, which is not represented by character in daily life. Anybody can talk. If we have duties to perform, or if we have unsatisfied desires, we should do them, satisfy our minds, our lower minds, and at the same time with our higher minds worship God. Let the lower mind have what is necessary to keep it quiet, and then exercise the higher mind in thinking about God. In this way we gradually rob the lower mind of its power, and are finally able to devote all the mind to God. So, if we would see God, we must be *men*. . . . Yes it is perfectly possible to find God, to become liberated from

future births, while working in the world. It is not *where we are*, nor *what we are doing* that hinders us, but *what we are and how we are doing*." Again later in the same day while at table he said : "While you are here try to get near to God. You can read other times, but now try to get close to Mother. Think of that one thing." In the evening our first walk to the gate was associated with, "Now try to *see* God. Put your whole time to that one end."

Many of his remarks contained food for years of thinking. Once in the meditation cabin after reading The Crest Jewel of Discrimination, he said, "First we are human, then we must be *men*, then aspire to God. First manhood, then aspiration, then final rest in God. We give ourselves to God and He gives us wisdom. He gives us Himself. Practicality was the key-note of all his talks. He sifted all ideas associated with the spiritual life, separating the sophistries which invariably cling to them from their real meaning. Speaking of the tendency of many persons to slight their duties as the result of their supposed zeal for meditation, he said : "That point is one very greatly misunderstood by those who think they want spirituality. They think that if they do not remember to do the necessary things, that it is a good sign they are thinking of God. It is nothing of the kind. It is a Tāmasic condition. We go dreaming about thinking, of God a little and the rest of the mind goes to everything, does nothing. We should do the things we have to do and then there will be plenty of time to think of God, *plenty of time*. We should be manly and do our work ourselves ; not leave it for others. We can meditate on God better for it. We should *know* what we are doing. We should keep alert and do what there is to do, thinking of God the while, and then meditate on God afterward."

Equality in relationships was another idea that received his scathing criticism. "Peace and helpfulness," he said, "never come from the idea of equality. It is a worldly idea that equality brings peace. Equality means, 'You are no better than I.' It may be said for decency that 'You are not less than I' ; but what is meant is, 'I am as great as you.' For peace and happiness there must be a giver and a receiver, a superior and an inferior. One must be willing to serve and one

willing to be served. All are not equal and cannot be. It is a delusion to think so."

The most trivial events were the occasions for him to bring out some pointy idea. One afternoon while talking over our lemonade he got some seeds into his mouth and spitting them away remarked, "That is the way to do at all times,— throw away the useless and retain the useful. We should discriminate at all times."

Concerning all actions contemplated in the future he used to say "Mother knows." He never said "I will do so and so," but, rather, "Mother willing, I will do so and so." On being questioned as to this way of speaking he replied, "The sense of egotism and egoism separates us from the consciousness of Mother. Only when we do our duty fully can we say that Mother does it. When Mother's will is done *in us*, the Mother does it."

So amidst the tangy fragrance of nature the days passed in talking, reading and meditating on God. In all this the outstanding experience was

my association with G. It became clear to me that had I been there alone, little real meditating would have been done. The struggle to adjust myself to the consciousness of isolation would have taken up the larger portion of my energies. The mental balance given by congenial association was necessary. Fortunately for me, I realised the greatness of the contact, and I gave myself up to it with all the devotion of which my nature was capable. Again and again he would say, "Now when you go back to the city take the spirit of the Ashrama with you. Make your home an Ashrama by living a deep, sweet, holy life." So it came to pass that for a brief span of days I stood in relation to myself in the light of a great spiritual awakening ; and I knew, even then as now, that the impetus received would abide with me as the years slipped by.

At last dawned the day when the Ashrama gate opened for me to pass out to take up afresh the thread of the old life made new and vital by the elixir of an undying spiritual enthusiasm.

### DEDICATORY STANZAS ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

स्वर्गीय श्रीमद् विवेकानन्दस्वामिनां पुण्यजन्मतिथौ निवेदनम् ।

( Read at the birthday anniversary at Bangalore. )

हित्वा स्वदेशं प्रियजन्मभूमिम्  
यातो विवेकामरधाम वीर ! ।  
योकाप्निदग्धा तवदेशमाता  
रोह्यते हृषभरासहिष्णुः ॥१॥

अभूत्यमस्याः क्षणजन्मपुत्रः  
त्वया विना साद्य बभूव तुश्च !  
प्रत्यूषमेधैः पिहितेऽहिमांशौ  
क्षायेव देशं जडताप्निचक्रे ॥२॥

स्वधर्मनिष्ठा परितः पखायिता  
कर्मानुरक्तिर्नन्च कुत्र लक्ष्यते ।  
परार्थसेवा अवणेन्द्रियाभ्या  
परानुवृत्तिः परमंहि पौरुषम् ॥३॥

1. Leaving your own country, the beloved place of your nativity, thou hast gone, O Hero, to the immortal abode of the Wise ; your mother country is now weeping in bereavement unable to bear the heavy pain ( of your loss ).

2. Thou wert but a short-lived son of Thy mother ; without thee, She has to-day become very destitute ; like the sun's rays covered by early morning clouds, has Inertia like shadows overpowered the country.

3. Devotion to one's Dharma has fled all round ; love of work and activity are not to be seen anywhere ; service of others has been reduced to a mere sound residing in the ear, and slavish dependance on others is the highest manliness,

स्वाधीनचिन्ता विलयं प्रथाता  
उच्छिष्टवृत्तिर्हि जनः समग्रः ।  
भोगार्थमुद्रकाः हितवुद्धिहीनाः  
धूर्घेव श्वानः पुरुषा भ्रमन्ति ॥४॥

दौर्गत्यमेतश्चिलं निराक्षय  
मनस्त्विचित्तं व्यथते प्रकामय ।  
त्वज्ञनम् पुरायेऽहनि तत्समेताः  
मनस्त्विनस्त्वामसकृत् स्परन्ति ॥५॥

स्थमेहि कर्मप्रवरात्र भारते  
प्रवोधयेमाननुजानकमठान् ।  
निगृढ वेदान्तरहस्यवोधनै-  
र्विमोचयेदं मृतकल्पभागतम् ॥६॥

यात्युप्रति भोगरतो न देशः  
त्वागेन मुक्तिं लभते स नूनम् ।  
देशात्मध्याध्युतहीनलोकै-  
र्ने कुञ्चित् कर्म महत् सुसाध्यम् ॥७॥

वेदोक्तमन्त्रैरिव ते निनाईः  
सुषुप्तसिहा इव लोकसिहाः ।  
निरस्य निद्रां पुरुषत्वहन्त्रीम्  
नवोदयमेनात्र कृतौ यतन्त्ताम् ॥८॥

तथाशिषः सन्तु गिरःसु दृष्टाः  
भवन्तु देवाः सततं सहायाः ।  
मनांसि नः सन्तु निरङ्कुशानि  
कर्मप्रवाहाः प्रवहन्त्वजस्थम् ॥९॥

नवरविकरदीपो हश्यते दिविभागः  
दिशिदिशिमृदुवायुः पुण्यगत्थी प्रवाति ।  
लखित मधुर गीतं गीयते पक्षिसङ्कृः  
भवत भवत वीर-भ्रातरः कर्मशूराः ॥१०॥

—त्वद्गुणमुग्धचंतसः कस्यचित् संवक्षय ।

4. Independent thinking has come to naught and all men are living on the cast-out thoughts of others ; devoid of the sense of real well-being, and hankering for self-enjoyment, people are wandering about like hungry dogs.

5. Seeing all these miseries, it pains much the mind of the thoughtful ; and so they, assembled in the holy day of thy nativity, remember thee again and again.

6. Come thou, supreme worker, to Bharata, and arouse the younger generation who are averse to work ; and by the teachings of the deepest secrets of the Vedanta, rescue this deathlike Bharata.

7. The country will not advance by addiction to enjoyment ; but by renunciation surely will it attain salvation ; for by vulgar men who are devoid of patriotism, no great work is easy of accomplishment anywhere.

8. By thy trumpet-call, like unto the sound of Vedic Mantras, let all the lion-hearted men, like roused-up lions, cast off their sleep, the killer of manhood, and with rejuvenated energy strive for success in work.

9. May they blessings descend like rain upon the heads of all, may the gods be always helpful, may our minds be in peace without any trouble, may the current of work flow in a copious stream !

10. The quarters are seen radiant with the fresh rays of the sun, in all directions the soft breeze is blowing laden with the sweet fragrance of the flowers, the birds are singing sweet and melodious notes.—Be thou, be thou, O brothers, heroes of action.

A servant.

## VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from page 137.)

**पञ्चीकृतेभ्यो भूतेभ्यः स्थूलेभ्यः शूर्वकर्मणा ।  
समुत्पन्नमिदं स्थूलं भोगायतनमात्मनः ॥**

**अवस्था जागरस्तस्य स्थूलार्थानुभवो यतः ॥८८॥**

88. This gross body is produced by one's past actions out of the gross elements subdividing and combining with the other four, and is the medium of experience for the soul. That is its waking state in which it perceives gross objects.

[ *Subdividing etc.—Panchikarana*: see note on Sloka 74. ]

**बाह्योन्द्रयः स्थूलपदार्थसंवान्,  
स्त्रक्षचन्दनस्त्रियादिविचित्ररूपाम् ।  
करोति जीवः स्वयमेतदात्मना  
तस्मात्प्रशस्तिर्वपुषोऽस्य जागरे ॥८८॥**

89. Identifying itself with this form the individual soul, though separate, enjoys gross objects, such as garlands and sandal-paste etc., by means of the external organs. Hence this body has its fullest play in the waking state.

**सर्वोपि बाह्यसंसारः पुरुषस्य यदाश्रयः ।  
विद्धि देहमिदं स्थूलं गृहवदगृहमेधिनः ॥८९॥**

90. Know this gross body to be like a house to the householder, on which rests man's entire dealing with the external world.

**स्थूलस्य सम्भवजरामरणानि धर्माः  
स्थौल्यादयो बहुविभाः पिशुताद्यवस्थाः ।  
घर्णांश्रमादिनियमा बहुधाऽमयाः स्युः  
पूजावमानबहुमानमुखा विशेषाः ॥९०॥**

91. Birth, decay and death are the various characteristics of the gross body, as also stoutness etc.; childhood etc. are its

different conditions; it has got various restrictions regarding caste and order of life; it is subject to various diseases, and meets with different kinds of treatment, such as worship, insult and high honours.

*Caste—Brâhmaṇa &c. Order of life—Brâhmaṇacharya etc. ]*

**बुद्धीन्द्रियाणि ध्रवणं त्वगत्ति  
द्राणां च जिह्वा विषयाद्यवोधनात् ।  
वाक्पाणिपादा गुदमस्युपस्थः  
कर्मन्द्रियाणि प्रवणेन कर्मसु ॥९१॥**

92. The ears, skin, eyes, nose and tongue are organs of knowledge, for they help us to cognise objects; the vocal organs, hands, legs etc. are organs of action, owing to their tendency for work.

**निगद्यतेऽन्तःकरणं मनोधी-  
रहड्डितश्चित्तमिति स्ववृत्तिभिः ।  
मनस्तु संकल्पविकल्पनादिभि-  
रुद्धिः पदार्थाध्यवसायधर्मतः ॥९३॥  
अत्राभिमानादहमित्यहड्डितः ।  
स्वार्थानुसन्धानगुणेन चित्तम् ॥९४॥**

93—94. The inner organ (Antahkarana) is called Manas, Buddhi, Ego or Chitta, according to their respective functions: the Manas, from its considering the pros and cons of a thing; the Buddhi, from its property of determining the truth of objects; the Ego, from its identification with this body as one's own self; and the Chitta, from its function of seeking for pleasurable objects.

**प्राणापानव्यानोदानसमाना भवत्यसौ प्राणाः ।  
स्वयमेव वृत्तिभेदाद्विकृतिभेदात्सुखर्णसलिला-  
दिवत् ॥९५॥**

95. The same Prána becomes Prána, Apána, Vyána, Udána and Samána according to their diversity of functions and modifications, like gold and water etc.

[Like gold etc.—Just as the same gold is fashioned into various ornaments, and as water takes the form of foam, waves, etc.]

**शागादि पञ्च श्रवणादि पञ्च**

प्राणादि पञ्चाभ्युखानि पञ्च ।

बुद्धाद्यविद्यापि च कामकर्मणी

पुर्येष्टकं सूक्ष्मशरीरमादुः ॥६६॥

96. The five organs of action such as speech etc., the five organs of knowledge beginning with the ear, the group of five Pránas, Buddhi and the rest, together with Nescience, desire and action—these eight ‘cities’ make up what is called the subtle body.

[Nescience &c.—See note on Sloka 55.]

**इदं शरीरं शृणु सूक्ष्मसंवितं**

लिङ्गं त्वपञ्चाकृतभूतसम्भवम् ।

सच्चासनं कर्मफलानुभावकं

स्थानानतोऽनादिरूपाभिरात्मनः ॥६७॥

97. Listen,—this subtle body, called also Linga body, is produced out of the elements before their subdividing and combining with each other, is possessed of desires and causes the soul to experience the fruits of its actions. It is a beginningless superimposition on the soul brought on by its own ignorance.

**स्वप्नो भवत्यस्य विभक्त्यवस्था**

स्वमात्रयेषण चिमाति यत्र ।

**स्वप्ने तु बुद्धिः स्वयमेव जाग्रत्-**

कालीननानाविभवासनाभिः ॥६८॥

**कर्त्तादिभावे प्रतिपद्य राजते**

यत्र स्वयं भाति ह्ययं परात्मा ।

**धीमात्रकोपाभिरयेषसादी**

न लिप्यते तत्कृतकर्मलेशैः ।

**यस्मादसङ्गस्ततपव कर्मभि-**

ने लिप्यते किञ्चितुपाधिना कृतैः ॥६६॥

98—99. Dream is a state of the soul distinct from the waking state, where it shines by itself. In dreams Buddhi, by itself, takes on the role of the agent and the like, owing to various desires of the waking state, while the supreme Atman shines in its own glory,—with Buddhi as its only superimposition, the witness of everything, and is not touched by the least work that the Buddhi does. As it is wholly unattached, it is not touched by any work that its superimpositions may perform.

[*Buddhi*—here stands for the Antahkarana—the “inner organ” or mind.

*By itself*—independently of the objective world.

*Takes on the role &c.*—The Atman is the one intelligent principle, and whatever Buddhi does it does borrowing the light of the Atman.]

**सर्वव्यापृतिकरणं लिङ्गमिदं स्याच्छिदात्मनः पुंसः ।**

**वास्यादिकमिव तक्षणसेनैवात्मा भवत्यसङ्गोऽयम् ॥**

100. This subtle body is the instrument for all activity of the Atman, who is Knowledge Absolute, like the adze and other tools of a carpenter. Therefore this Atman is perfectly unattached.

**अन्धत्वमन्दत्वपटुत्वधर्माः**

सौगुण्यवैगुण्यवशाद्विचक्षुषः ।

**वाधिर्यमूकत्वमुखास्तथैव**

**ओत्रादिधर्मा न तु वेत्तुरात्मनः ॥१०१॥**

101. Blindness, weakness, and sharpness are conditions of the eye, due to its fitness or defectiveness merely; so are deafness and dumbness etc. of the ear and so forth,—but never of the Atman, the Knower.

(To be continued.)



## SELF-SURRENDER.

( SWAMI VISHUDDHANANDA. )

**S**ELF-SURRENDER is a calm and sweet resignation to God—a blissful state which can be attained through long, long years of spiritual practices. Our egoism to which we cling most tenaciously is the root of all evil in our transmigratory existence and is also the cause of our bondage to this world. The more the ego predominates in us, the farther we are away from God, the greater our sufferings and tribulations in this world. The *summum bonum* of life is therefore to dedicate our ego to God. This state of self-surrender is compared to a sort of sweet repose which we enjoy after a period of hard and strenuous physical labour. It is indeed a blissful state, having no idea of 'me and mine' and all our thoughts and energies flow Godwards, we obey His will and live in Samsara quite free as a bird flying about in the open expanse of the sky.

Is it possible to resign our ego to God and work without the idea of *Aham* ('I-ness') or having no thought of the doer? To this question we reply that we can do a greater amount of work when we have no selfish ends in view and in a more perfect way than we can ordinarily work in our every-day life with the idea of egoism. Our scriptures aim at self-abnegation and teach us how by following various means and methods prescribed by them we can attain to this state of liberation. The Lord Sri Krishna instructs his beloved disciple Arjuna in the Gita as to how he should conduct himself in the battle-field. Here we find the secret of work taught to Arjuna. The work when done with a selfish object in view, says the Lord, and with the idea of a doer binds a man and the results accruing thereby must necessarily produce effects on him. He therefore cautions Arjuna not to have an eye on the results of the work he performs and exhorts him to fight as a true Kshatriya, being an instrument in His hands and surrendering his ego to Him. The Lord goes on to say that the *gunas* of Prakriti perform all actions but the Atman of man deluded by the idea of egoism, wilfully takes the

fetters round the feet by accepting the idea of 'I am the doer.' Arjuna could not grasp the subtle philosophy of work but Sri Krishna led him step by step and pointed out that he would not clearly understand this philosophy until he resigned himself to Him. Arjuna found it next to an impossibility to follow this teaching and so the Lord took compassion on him, lifted the veil from the face of the Future and showed him His Universal Form. The sight of this made him realise that his kinsmen with whom he had hesitated to fight on the eve of the battle were all lying dead in that all-pervading Form. Thus, his eyes were opened and he was impressed with the idea that Prakriti in its own working-out will compass its ends, that he also as a player of Prakriti must play his part as an instrument in His hands. Arjuna desisted from fighting because of his attachment for this 'me and mine,' his own personal likes and dislikes deterred him from treading the path which duty and righteousness clearly pointed out. The thought of sin in killing his kinsmen in battle now altogether left him and after dedicating his self to the Lord he was able to fight as a true Kshatriya. The secret of Karma is therefore to dedicate our 'self' to God and work as an instruments in His hands for righteous ends leaving its fruit to Him. Then to whatever crosses and difficulties our duty may take us we shall be able to tread the path with unflinching steps.

Thus by giving up our 'self' to God, there is an infinite expansion of the bounds of our life, and we no more limit ourselves to the narrow interests of 'me and mine.' If the pleasure of attachment to the selfish 'me and mine' is so much that we do not desire to part with it, then think of the bliss of the infinite life, when this circle of 'me and mine,' expands and takes in wide spaces of life and interests. Coming out of narrow grooves with little interests and desires, we begin to live the life of the All. It is then that we begin to feel for others and play a real part in the world and help the cause of suffering humanity, but so long as

we have the idea of 'me and mine' implanted in us we are no better than ordinary mortals bound by the pairs of opposites, viz. pleasure and pain, happiness and misery and the trivial interest of life absorbing and obsessing our whole mental field.

The great prophets and saviours of the world who have trampled this self under foot, how they impress us with their largeness of vision, their wide mental horizon! Their sense of a Divine order in things, their wide out-look, their transcendental emotion and striving for Ideals, everything about them is on a large and grand scale; all these irradiate from them increasing their strength and stature; they seem to us like gigantic Figures, "their heads striking the skies, their shadows covering the earth." Think of Lord Buddha whose heart was as broad as the infinite ocean. Not born with 'self' he made the sufferings of the world his own and strove to find a way out. He had not the least idea of 'me and mine' in him. Sri Ramanujacharya who was as great a soul as Buddha, when initiated by his Guru, was particularly asked not to reveal the sacred *mantram* he had received from him and that it should be kept in strict confidence. But Sri Ramanujacharya knew the efficacy of the *mantram*, and felt an indomitable passion to give it to the ignorant people merged in ignorance in order that they might be saved. His heart bled as it were for the miserable condition of his brethren. Mounting the tower of Conjeeveram he exclaimed, "Come, all ye children of my Beloved, I shall deliver you from the miseries of the world. Take this sacred *mantram*, repeat it and ye shall be saved." When his Guru came to know that he had disobeyed him by giving out the *mantram*, he became angry with him and said, "Thou art doomed for ever, thou hast dared to disobey me, thy Guru, and as a result thou shall live for ever in hell." Sri Ramanuja imploring his pardon said, "My beloved Guru, true it is that I have disobeyed you and that I am doomed for ever. I am ever ready to go to hell and be there till the end of the creation, but I shall have the consolation that I have saved so many thousands of ignorant souls at the sacrifice of my own insignificant single self." Just think of the unbounded love of this great Acharya of Southern India towards these ignorant souls. We instinctively bow in reverence before

these giants among men who bore a world's woe on their shoulders and who made the whole world their own and we seem pygmies in comparison, through our obsession with the little interests of our little lives. Is it be possible to think of others much less to love them more, when we are centred in ourselves? No, this expansion of heart is possible only when we are rid of the idea of egoism. As instruments in His hands, when we are able to do this we shall be true workers and attain to the state of liberation in our life. This is the ideal of the Karma Yogins.

Now we shall see how the devotees resign themselves to the Lord and live in Him and work as instruments in His hands. They approach Him by establishing some relationship with Him such as father or mother or master etc. and worship Him in that light with fervent devotion. They offer what they possess viz. wealth, property, nay their own body and mind unto their beloved and remain satisfied with pure devotion only. When the Love for God begins to grow in intensity everything is covered over by it, all things are seen as the Beloved's and our love flows to all without any distinction, or hindrance. When this all-devouring love of God dawns on the human heart, he is raised far above the human level. In this flood-tide, the personality of the devotee is drowned, and pain and pleasure, good and evil, happiness and misery are the same to him, as all 'the dual throng' come from the Beloved. They never look to their physical comforts and sacrifice everything for Him. This absolute reliance of the devotees is really wonderful. All the pains and pleasures, sorrows and miseries of life are annulled by it. Pavhari Baba, the great saint of Ghazipur, we are told, was once bitten by a cobra and subsequently shut himself up in his cell for three days; when he came out, his disciples asked him and he replied, 'My children, a messenger from the Beloved came.' This perfect reliance on God is the effacement of the idea of 'me and mine' and is the outcome of complete resignation to God. Hence we have read of Sri Ramakrishna praying to the Divine Mother, 'Oh Mother, I am Thy machine and thou art one working the machine, I am Thy chariot, Thou art my chariooteer, I am Thy room, Thou art my tenant etc.' He dedicated his ego to Mother and lived as a five-year old

child of Her with no attachment for things of the world. Love is reciprocal. The Lord loves His devotees and He is attracted by them through their devotion just as a piece of iron is attracted by a magnet. He comes nearer and nearer and manifests Himself to them and they completely resign themselves to Him and attain perfection. So we find that self-surrender is also the ideal of the devotees. This is the end of their spiritual Sadhana, when they are able to give themselves up to God, along with what they call 'me and mine.' Nothing will be able to produce a reaction on them and make them become identified with them, verily the bonds of the world will then be cut. In whatever circumstances or place the devotee is placed, his heart is given to the Lord and the compass of his mind is true to God and he does not know what it is to complain of pain and misery; merged in the bliss of the Lord and they pass by unheeded. His hand works, but his mind is given to the Lord. Such work without any idea of egoism is fruitful blessing the doer, the deed, and the object of the work.

We find also the Jnanins striving to merge their apparent self in the Universal Self, the Atman, through the process of discrimination. They look upon this phenomenal world of manifoldness as Maya and postulate the existence of one Reality behind it and in order to realise this Reality they make a search after it. To find out the unity underlying all this variety of forms is the goal of their lives. Their process of discovering the one Reality is rather difficult, but striving hard and by denying everything, viz. the world, body, mind, ego, they realise the all-blissful Atman and become one with it. Thus the Jnanins also surrender their ego to attain to perfection.

So we find that this egism binds us fast to the world and until we are freed from its clutches, we cannot attain to the state of perfection. The idea of 'me and mine' which is born of this egism makes us selfish, self-centred and narrow-minded, and is the cause of our sufferings in this world and the rooting out of this ego is the end of all Sadhana. Hence, by surrendering our ego and 'me and mine' to the blissful Lord, we attain to the sumum bonum of life.

#### A NOTICE.

Sir John Woodroffe's book on Shakti and Shakta is on our table and has given us interesting reading, because of its easy presentation of the theory and practice of Shakti Sadhana.

We venture however to offer some comments on one or two points of the writer's argument. When he says that the Shakti-vada of the Tantras is an original conception and differs from the

Maya of Vedanta in that the latter is unconscious in Vedanta whereas the Shakti of the Tantras is a conscious principle, we demur. Maya in Vedanta, as the principle of the manifold ignorance is certainly *Jada* (unconscious). But Maya in the sense of Brahman-shakti or Chitsakti is not cognised by Sankara as an unconscious principle (the difference of *Jada* and Chaitanya, it is to be remembered, is one of degree). When the Brahman is apprehended before its degeneration into duality of ignorance by Avidya, when it is seen as underlying all the motions and changes of phenomenal existence, it is called Brahma-Shakti. For no object can have any existence apart from Brahman which is involved in all its modifications. It is Brahman in movement as it were ; not that it has really moved, otherwise that will really break the changelessness of the Brahman, but when it is seen through the veil of movement it is conceived as Shakti. It is the conscious principle ; it is one and non-different from Brahman, as the Brahman is conceived as being involved in all its modifications. It is this Brahman, the Brahman in movement as it were, as underlying the moving phenomenal existence, which the Tantras have developed into Adyashakti, or Mahashakti. In that it is one and non-different from Brahman, the difference being caused by one of view-points. But Maya, the principle of the ignorance of manifoldness, which has brought about the play of manifoldness, by covering the knowledge of the Brahman, by making us forget our real Swarupa, that Maya is Anadyavida, that is *Jada*, the Nescience. So we must distinguish between the Maya, the principle of Nescience of the Vedanta, and the Brahman and its Shakti which are one and non-different which the Tantras have developed later. In one of Sri Ramanakrishna's sayings this point is brought out nicely. He says, "Brahman and Shakti are *aveda*, (non-different) ; as fire and its heat, the serpent and its tortuous motion. If I have to think of the one, I have to think of the other. The Lord when I look upon Him as *acivitata*, (unchangeable immovable) I call Him Brahman, when I conceive of Him as creating, manifesting and dissolving the universe, I call Him Adyashakti, Mahashakti." He who is *achala*, has *chala* also, change can only be thought of by an unchanging something ; an unchanging something can only be thought as underlying change, so long, that is to say, as we have to think at all. But if it is beyond everything so that it cannot be brought within the purview of any Shastra or Tantra it is *Dwaita-advaita-vivarjita* and beyond both change and changelessness. So what the Tantras have developed into Shakti is not the counterpart of the Maya, the principle of Avidya and manifoldness of Brahman, but the Brahma-Shakti which is non-different from Brahman—the Chit-shakti, conceived as underlying all phenomena. There are

passages in Sankara's writing, in which also he looks upon Brahman as underlying all moving phenomena and being one and non-different from Brahman, the changeless (i.e. it suffers no change or degeneration thereby, it is conscious), the difference being only one of standpoints.

"कार्यमपि अगत् विषु कलेषु सत्यं न व्यभिचरति, एकं च  
युनः सत्यं।" सदात्पदं हि सर्वे सर्वैव सद्बुद्धि, अनुगमात्  
(Gita Bhashya 10-18) —अप्रियाद्यव्यादिद्विषेन स्वैरेव  
विभक्तः न विशदस्वप्नोपमहेन (Brihad-Up. Bhasya 1.2.  
3.) We see no;difference between this conception of  
Brahman being involved unimpaired in all its  
modifications, yet without स्वरूपापमई (losing its  
real nature viz. consciousness) and the conscious  
principle of Shakti later developed by Tantras.  
In another place Sankara expressly states by an  
example. न च विशेषदर्शनमत्रिन् वस्त्वन्यत्वं भवति । न  
हि देवदत्तः संकेऽप्तिहस्तपादः प्रसारितहस्तपादश्च विशेषेन  
दृश्यमानंपि वस्त्वन्यत्वं गच्छति स एवेति प्रत्यभिजातात् ।—  
(Ved Bhash 2-1-18). Here Sankara expressly states  
the non-difference of Brahman and Brahma being  
thought of as being above all change and as  
underlying all changes. But of course from the  
transcendental standpoint, even Shakti is a de-  
generation. Of that alone, Sankara does not say.  
Then it is neither Brahman nor Maya nor  
anything : it is Neti, Neti, Atma, Dvaita-advaita-  
vivarjitam, beyond change and changelessness.

What is the conception of Maya in Sankara's philosophy ? "Before creation, as with quelled modification, without any vibration, but with slightly aroused leaning towards the creation, the Sat or Brahman exists." So Maya is the उन्मुखीन state of Brahman, facing towards creation, as it were. This is Maya. Then, by subsequent modifications all the manifold world has came out. So we see, according to Sankara Maya is nothing but the Shakti of Brahma and the relation of Maya and Brahma is also said to be by Ratnaprava-tikakar as तादात्म-  
संबन्धः, relation of non-difference. So Maya according to Sankara is but the Shakti of Brahman, as the power of Maya is derived from Brahman it is an intelligent power as Sankara expressly states in his Gita-Bhashya उत्तमः पुरुषः स्वकीयथा चैतन्यय-  
षलशक्त्या आविश्य विभक्तिः । (Gita-Bhashya 15-7.)  
"The *Uttama-purusha* or Paramatma by His own intelligent power is supporting the universe." The difference of Maya as Brahma-shakti, and of Maya as the principle of Nescience seems to us a clear difference in Sankara's philosophy. In the former the principle of becoming is looked at from above as Mayadhishthita Brahmachaitanya, as intelligent principle, giving Pravritti to creation, yet remaining unaffected and unmodified through all change whereas Maya as principle of Nescience is looked at from below, from within creation as

subject to it, and hence *hiding the real nature of Brahman*, gives us the manifold forms of creation.

Even the Upanishads speak of the Brahman as being involved in all the modifications and yet not losing its nature or being affected by them. Exactly how the changeless Brahman persisted unchanged through all the changing phenomena without destroying its nature is a question which it is impossible for our intellect to grasp this is Maya. Yet it is a fact all the same which Sankara has not shirked but acknowledged and so has explained Brahman as the cause of and underlying all phenomena, yet retaining its nature unchanged and unimpaired. It is this fact which the Tantras have emphasised and developed the conception of *Adya-shakti* working out all the phenomena of the universe. In Vedanta Bhashya on 2. 1. 27, in reply to an objection how the Brahman being the cause of all modifications and involved in them yet retains its absoluteness Sankara says that for this only Sruti is the authority as to how the Brahman remains unmodified through all modifications ; for by Tarka (logic) such an apparently contradictory thing cannot be solved.

The unchanging unit Brahman is the only reality ; you cannot conceive of change and admit the coexistence of change along with it. So when we are within the changing phenomenal world, the absolute, unchanging Brahman is non-existent for us, and when we are established in the Brahman, the changing world has vanished for us. A rope mistaken as a snake is mistaken wholly as a snake not as half-snake and half-rope—this is the statement of the transcendental position of Sankara. Yet for all purposes of explaining the world and creation, and so long as we are within the phenomenal existence, Brahman has to be posited as the underlying substratum behind all phenomenal objects and the underlying Shakti behind all phenomena of relative existence ; otherwise It becomes a mere void and nullity to our ordinary experience. So Anandagiri in commentary on Gita Bhasya on 13. 13 says : The Brahman as devoid of all modification, beyond the cognition of mind and speech, is likely to be regarded as a nullity, Brahman is regarded as the underlying *sat* behind all phenomena, the cause of the movement of Indriyas etc. Sankara also says, "From the fact of the perception of phenomenal hearing, seeing, knowing, the existence of Brahman is assumed etc." अदि हि नाम-  
स्पे न व्याकीयते, तदाऽस्यात्मनो निष्पापिकं रूपं प्रसाम-  
पनात्यया न प्रतिष्ठायते । (Sank. Bhasya). If the Brahman had not manifested names and forms then the Upadhi-less, essence-of-knowledge aspect of Brahman could not be manifest to our mental cognition. For the changeless is only cognised as underlying charges, the Formless as running through forms. Also Brahman as Shakti has to be posited as underlying all the phenomena of relative

existence, otherwise there is the objection of आकृतिक प्रसंग of Jagat, i. e. the world coming without any cause: So Sankara distinctly says in Vedanta Bhasya, प्रलीयमानमपि चेष्टं जगत् शक्तवशेषमेव प्रलीयते इतरया आकृतिकप्रसंगात् (Ved. Bhasya 1-3-30.) We contend it is this aspect of Brahman as underlying objects and phenomena, which is also acknowledged by Sankara as we have shown, that is developed by the Tantras later, so that the Infinite Being of Vedanta is translated into Infinite Power of the Tantras. That this is the view taken even by Shákta worshippers who have reached to a high state of Shakti-sadhana is borne out by facts. Ramaprasad, the paragon of Shakti worshippers in its noblest form, in Bengal, realised the Shakti or Kali as one and non-different from Brahman. In one of his songs portraying his attitude towards Shakti and recording the deepest realisation of his spiritual life he says in unmistakable words, "Having known the essence of truth that Kali is Brahman, I have given up all duality of 'Dharma and Adharma.'"

The newness of Shaktivada of the Tantras is therefore, we contend, not one of conception, already existing in the Vedanta as we have seen, but in the bold original applications of that doctrine and in the rich symbolism of practical Sadhana embodying life-giving principles which it has developed as corollaries from that principle.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

**SWAMI Bodhananda**, Lecturer and Teacher, Vedanta Society, New York City, America, has been holding classes on the Vedanta philosophy and lecturing every Sunday on the principles and practice of Vedanta. He also holds practical classes on the practical side of Yoga, the study of psychology, and the practice of meditation and concentration on Thursdays at 8 p. m.

At the request of the Sri Ramakrishna Society, Rangoon, Swami Shantananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras, paid his second visit to Rangoon on the 9th April last, the primary object of his visit being to awaken the dormant consciousness of the Rangoon public as to the necessity for a building for the Society. During his stay here the Swamiji held six discourses on the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. His first public lecture was on our Past and Present delivered on the 29th April. In the first week of May the Swamiji visited Pegu where he delivered a lecture on Our Present Needs; and on the result of his visit the Society gained a few more sympathisers who promised Rs. 725 towards the building fund. The public celebration of the 83rd birthday anniversary of

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva was observed in a grand style at Mr. S. R. Reddiar's new school buildings on Sunday the 19th May, when Sankittans were sung, nearly 400 poor were sumptuously fed, a Harikatha discourse entitled Lakshmanasakthi was given by Brahma Sri C. Srinivasa Acharya, and a splendid lecture on Sri Ramakrishna and the Ideal of Universal Religion was delivered by the Swamiji, followed by short speeches in Tamil, Hindi and Bengali. At the close of the day's programme was announced the munificent gift of Babu Sashi Bhushan Neogi, a local well-to-do merchant and philanthropist, who presented the Society with a building site valued Rs. 6000 and a cash donation of Rs. 10,000. On the next day the 20th the Swamiji laid the foundation-stone for the building on the above-mentioned site, after the due performance of Homa and other Vedic rites.

The Swamiji lectured in Hindi at the Burma Rice Merchants' Association at the request of the Bharat Mandal Sabha, and also in Bengali to a large Bengali audience at the Durga Temple on Sri Ramakrishna and His Sadhana. His lectures on the Evolution of Life in the local Theosophical Lodge on the 5th May, and on the Ideal of Life in the Bengali Social Club on the 26th May were highly illuminating. Renunciation and service, said the Swamiji, must be the foundation stones on which should be built the fabric of a true spiritual life. It is the fervent hope of the members that with the construction of a habitation for the Society and with the completion of the details of the affiliation to the present Institution assured by the Swamiji, a new and vigorous life will be instilled into the Society and that it will live to perpetuate and diffuse the noble and inspiring teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Deva among the various creeds and faiths in these lands of Farther India.

We regret to announce the passing away of Bhaskar Vishnu Phadake, a worker in the field of Marathi literature, who was much interested in the writings and work of Swami Vivekananda. For the purpose of popularising the writings and message of the revered Swami Vivekananda he alone bought, without any joint-ownership, the copyright for the Marathi translation of the Swami's writings (The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda and The Life of Swami Vivekananda, publications of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati) from the late Swami Prajnananda, President of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Lohaghat, in pursuance of which he had been bringing them out in parts. He had brought out 4 parts when his work was prematurely cut off by his sad and untimely end. May the Lord's blessings be on him for his labours in the Cause, and may his family find consolation in their bereavement!

# ग्रन्थालय ग्रन्थालय



उत्तिष्ठत आग्रहत

प्राप्य वराग्निशोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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## CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA,

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

### XVI.

[ Place—Belur, monastery in a rented house.

Year—1898, November.

Subjects—The visit to Amarnath in Kashmir.—Hearing of the Divine Voice of the Goddess and giving up of all planning from the mind.—Existence of departed spirits.—Not proper to entertain the desire of seeing ghosts and other spirits of the departed.—The vision of a departed spirit by Swamiji and rescuing him by Sraddha and mental prayer.]

Swamiji has returned from Kashmir two or three days ago. His health is indifferent. When the disciple came to the Math, Swami Brahmananda said, "Since returning from Kashmir Swamiji does not speak to anybody, he sits in one place rapt in thought; you go to him and by talking and conversations try to draw his mind a little towards worldly objects.

The disciple coming to Swamiji's room in the upper story saw—Swamiji sitting in *mukta padmásana* posture, and as if immersed in deep meditation. There is no smile on his face, his brilliant eyes have no

outward look, as if intent on seeing something inside. Seeing the disciple he only said, "You have come, my son, take your seat," and lapsed into silence. The disciple seeing the inside of his left eye reddened asked, "How is it that your eye is coloured red?" "That is nothing," saying this he again sat silent. Even when after sitting a long time Swamiji did not speak, the disciple got very impatient with grief and touching his feet said, "Won't you relate to me whatever you have seen and met with at Amarnath?" By the disciple's touching his feet, the tensity of his mood was broken a little;

as if his attention was diverted a little externally. He said, "Since visiting Amarnath I feel as if Siva is sitting on my head for twenty-four hours." The disciple heard it with speechless wonder.

Swamiji.— I made great religious austerity and practices at Amarnath and Kshir Bhavani. Go and get me a *chellum* of tobacco, I will relate everything to you.

The disciple, very pleased, and in obedience to his behests prepared and gave him tobacco. Swamiji slowly smoking began to say, "On the way to Amarnath, I made a very steep ascent of the road; by that path, the pilgrims do not generally travel. But the determination came upon me that I must go by that path and as the resolve so I did. The labour of the strenuous ascent has told on my body. It is so biting cold there, that you feel like pin-pricks.

Disciple.— I have heard that one has to visit the Image of Amarnath naked, is it so?

Swamiji.— Yes, I entered the cave with only my *kaupin* on and my body smeared with the holy ash; I did not then feel any heat or cold. When I came out of the temple, I was benumbed by the cold.

Disciple.— Did you see the 'holy' pigeons? I have heard, in that cold no living creatures are found to live there, but a flock of pigeons from some unknown place frequent the place occasionally.

Swamiji.— Yes, I saw three or four white pigeons; whether they live in the cave or the neighbouring hills I could not ascertain.

Disciple.— Sir, I have heard people say that the sight of pigeons on coming out of the temple indicate that you are really blessed with the vision of Siva.

Swamiji said, 'so I have heard, the sight of the pigeons brings what desires you entertain to fruition.'

Then Swamiji said, on the way back he returned to Srinagar by the general road by which the pilgrims return. Few days after returning to Srinagar he went to visit Kshir Bhavani Devi and staying there for seven days worshipped the Devi and made Homa to her with offerings of *kshir* (condensed milk). Every day he used to worship the Devi with a maund of *kshir* as offering. One day while worshipping the thought arose in Swamiji's mind, "Mother Bhavani has been manifesting Her Presence here for untold years. The Yavanas came and destroyed Her temple yet the people of the place did nothing to protect Her. Alas, if I were then living, I could never have borne it silently"—thinking in this strain, his mind was much pained and oppressed by pangs of sorrow and grief, then he distinctly heard the voice of the Mother saying, "According to My desire, the Yavanas have destroyed the temple. It is My desire that I live in a dilapidated temple, can I not erect a seven-storied temple of gold here if I so desire? What can you do? Shall I protect you or shall you protect me!!" Swamiji said, "Since hearing that Divine Voice, I keep and cherish no more plans. The idea of building Maths etc. I have given up; whatever Mother wills, so it will be." The disciple speechless with wonder began to think, did he not one day tell me, "Whatever you see and hear is but the reflection and echo of your Inward Self, there is nothing outside"?—and fearlessly spoke it out also—"Sir, you say that Divine Voices are the echo of our inward thoughts and feelings." Swamiji being grave said, "Whether it be internal or external, if you actually hear with your

ears as I have done, such a disembodied voice, can you deny it and call it false? Divine Voices are actually heard, just as you and I are talking, likewise.

The disciple without entroverting accepted Swamiji's words; for there was such a persuasive force in his words that one could not but accept them; before the force of his words, argument and reasoning were all swept away.

The disciple now brought up the subject of departed spirits. He said, "Sir, these ghosts and departed spirits we hear about, which the Shastras corroborate time and again, are all these true or not?"

Swamiji.— Certainly they are true. Whatever we don't see, are they all false for that? Beyond your sight, millions of universes are revolving at great distances. Because you do not see, are they non-existent for that? But then, do not put your mind on these subjects of ghosts and spirits. Your mental attitude should be that ghosts exist, but I have no concern with them. Your real work is—to realise the Atman within this body. When you realise this Atman, ghosts and spirits will all be your slaves.

Disciple.— But, Sir, I think that a sight of them will strengthen my belief in the hereafter, and all doubts about the hereafter will vanish.

Swamiji.— You are great souls ; even you have to strengthen your belief in the 'hereafter' by ghosts and spirits ! You have read so many sciences and scriptures—have mastered so many secrets of this wide universe—even with such knowledge, you have to acquire the knowledge of the Atman by the study of ghosts and spirits ! What a shame!

Disciple.— Well, Sir, have you ever seen ghosts and spirits?

Swamiji narrated that a certain deceased relative of his used to come to him as a disembodied spirit. Sometimes it used to bring to him information about distant events. But on verification, some of its informations were not found to be correct. Afterwards at a certain place of pilgrimage he prayed for it mentally wishing it might be released—since then he did not see it again.

The disciple then questioned Swamiji if Sráddha or other *postmortem* ceremonies appeased the departed spirits in any way. Swamiji replied, "That is not impossible." On the disciple's asking for the grounds of that belief Swamiji said, "I will explain the subject to you at length some day. There are irrefutable arguments on the point that the Sráddha ceremony appeases the departed beings. Today I don't feel well I shall explain it to you another day." But the disciple did not get another opportunity in life to ask that question of Swamiji.

What is death ? What are terrors ? Do not you see the Lord's face in them ? Fly from evil and terror and misery and they will follow you. Face them and they will flee. The whole world worships ease and pleasure and very few dare to worship that which is painful. To rise above both is the idea of freedom. Unless man passes through this gate he cannot be free. We all have to face these. We strive to worship the Lord, but the body rises between, Nature rises between Him and us and blinds our vision. We must learn how to worship and love Him in the thunderbolt, in shame, in sorrow, in sin. All the world has ever been preaching the God of virtue. I preach a God of virtue and a God of sin in one. Take Him if you dare,—that is the one way to salvation; then alone will come to us the Truth Ultimate which comes from the idea of oneness.

—Vivekananda.

## OCCASIONAL NOTES.

THE writer of an interesting article in the April issue of 'Modern Review,' takes exception to the Rectorial address where His Excellency the Governor of Bengal has suggested of giving a place to Indian philosophy in the curricula of undergraduate studies in the University and thus diminishing the preponderating place which the study of Western philosophy occupies. The learned writer argues that Western philosophy should be retained as part of undergraduate studies, and relegates the study of Indian philosophy to a subsequent period! He argues at length why the study of Indian philosophy is not likely to be beneficial to the Indian student in his undergraduate days.

The writer first objects to the divine character of our Scripture as likely to be a drawback in the study of the philosophy in that it seeks to impose its dogma and demands unquestioning allegiance to its principles; but rightly understood not only does it not mean to stifle independent thinking, but it gives the greatest scope and incentive to one's power of reasoning. The divine character of the scriptures like the Vedas is not one invested from outside by the authority of any personality, but their divinity is based on the authority of the eternal principles of spiritual laws which were discovered by certain seers. Their authority is the authority of eternal principles and challenges verification as any scientific truth of the latest time. As such they are as conformable to the canons of logical reasoning as any other subject of human research. The Vedas themselves say that they are

the *expiration* of the Great Being. What other books are more thoroughgoing in their devotion to truth as when they say that for the highest goal, even the Vedas themselves have to be transcended, showing their tentative character as guide-posts on the way to truth.

But our Scriptures have in the interests of the Truth which they have to serve, placed Intuition and inspiration above the tyranny of the intellect. Their thesis is that the Truth is beyond the pale of the intellect, and is not to be attained by much "reading of the Vedas" or by the process of ratiocination. By that they do not seek to palm off any and everything as inspiration upon credulous mankind, but they challenge verification of their truth like any scientific truth. They also say that their truths do not contradict reasoning but are quite conformative. True inspiration although transcending, does not contradict reason. Therefore we find all our commentators and philosophers throwing the scorching light of reason on the Vedas and reasoning, harmonising, explaining and placing everything on rational foundations. The play of reasoning on the part of commentators seems to us to be as free and unfettered as of any rationalist of the modern times; but unlike the rationalist with his iconoclastic creed and zeal for breaking down every article of faith and creed and reducing men to a mass of negations, glorying in believing in nothing except the life of comfortable senses, reason in the hands of our commentators have resulted in sifting the contents of our scriptures, harmonising

and co-ordinating their different parts, and eventually drawing out live-growing principles of constructive living. Perhaps our 'Hindu Master of Arts' is not aware that all parts of the Vedas are not of equal authority. Those which are traditional or of mere historical import, or those which constitute mere incentive to action, are relegated in Vedic exegesis to a subordinate position to those which deal with the eternal principles, Soul, God etc. In books of Vedantic philosophy the highest honour is shown to reasoning and *vichara*. In one passage in the Yogavasistha it is said in so many words, "Accept what comes from a boy if it is supported by reason; but reject unmercifully what proceeds even from the mouth of Brahma, if unsupported by reason." So our philosophy gives the fullest scope to reasoning and the examination of its contents but all is based on reverence of those ancient scriptures, the Vedas, which not being a systematised philosophy, but records of inspirations of different Seers, contain germs of the most varied systems of thought, as have been deduced later by subsequent Acharyas. How far the power of reasoning in the hands of any *adhikári*, unattended by wholesome checks of reverence for competent authority is an unmixed blessing and advances the well-being of mankind, we are not sure. The Vedas again being the central books which are looked upon with veneration by all propounders of philosophical systems, many divergent schools of thought have been deduced from them. They freely criticise and examine rationally their respective contents throwing the full flood of reasoning on them, and one may ally himself to any school to which his reasoning may take him, and yet remain a Hindu. The

fact that all systems owe allegiance to the Vedas has not in practice constituted a limitation to the exercise of independent thinking; the Vedas containing the germs of all shades of thought have given the amplest scope to independent thinking, as shown by diverse systems of thought having sprung from it. The reverence paid to the Vedas by the propounders of all schools of thought by allying themselves to them has served the purpose of unifying our culture, imparting to it a wonderful eclecticism and giving a richness and variety of type all based on an underlying unity. It has also constituted a great integrating factor in our civilisation which has held it together despite the disruptive influences which have surrounded it during long periods of history.

The strongest reason why Indian philosophy ought to occupy a prominent place in the education of the Indian student is that it represents his own culture and the mental elements of his own being, the evolution of centuries of national existence. So before meeting the world in the face, he has to be firm-grounded in his own being, to know what he is, to be established in his strength, then only can he really accept, assimilate, truths from other sources. But if he starts with a want of faith in his own culture, not knowing the evolution of his own mind and culture, he will be thrown quite in the sea in the mass of the thought-systems of the world, not knowing their adaptability to his own evolution or their relation to it, he will not be able to make any organic synthesis out of them, but will be living a sort of jelly-fish existence, taking up scraps here and there, without their blending with his own mental constitution and

crystallising into an organic thought-system. Our 'Hindu Master of Arts,' seems to think that one can build thought-systems which will be dynamic in the lives of individuals in the air without reference to their past culture and inheritance; in that he displays ignorance of all elementary principles of human progress. The man whose moral and cultural backbone is broken by want of faith in his cultural inheritance, who thinks his own life and the life of his ancestors has been a tissue of mistakes, is a hopeless being of whom one cannot make anything, even if one feeds him daily on the ambrosia of the thought-systems of other types of culture. So we think that if we want the Indian student to really benefit by his study of Western philosophy and thought-systems, and make them operative principles of life, not merely to take mental gymnastics and sing paens of glory to his western Gurus at the expense of love, reverence and appreciation of his own culture, he has first and foremost to be grounded in his own thought-system, his own mental inheritance, nay his own *being*. Every culture and civilisation represents a distinct outlook on life, and reading of the universe, and all individuals within that cultural fold are the embodiments in degrees more or less of that ideal. It represents a part of the 'thought of God,' which he must hold on to and transmit to posterity, and in that mould his mental improvement has been cast through succeeding generations. To ask him to give up this cultural inheritance and to take up *harum-scarum* any other without reference to his own is impossible and if he succeeds in doing that he commits cultural suicide, digs his own grave to bury himself therein. He has no place then in the economy of Nature, represents no idea, he is soulless, lifeless, an automaton,

driven hither and thither by the world-forces. But on the basis of his own cultural strength, he can build the most rich and varied type of character by profiting by study of other thought-systems, and giving new expression to his own Idea in the forms of the New. Some of the fairest flowers of Indian manhood which have been produced as a result of this mingling of the ideals of the East and West beginning from Raja Ram Mohon Roy to the Swami Vivekananda of our days, are an auspicious foreboding of the rich promise of the future. In them the virtues of the East and West have blended in a harmonious ideal, who strong in the abstractedness and metaphysical speculation of the East, as in the virility, the intense practicability of the West, have by their rich and varied personality commanded the homage and allegiance of the East and West alike. Therefore Eastern philosophy as a builder of individual and national character is ten times more inspiring and effective in its appeal to Indian students than any system of thought borrowed from elsewhere.

Then the writer picks out some of the weak elements of present-day Hindu philosophy, the result of latter-day degeneration and misconception and argues that these not only diminish the usefulness of Hindu philosophy to the Indian graduate but are positively deleterious in their effects on their character. He says that the Indian philosophy by preaching the doctrine of Karma has dried up the fountains of activity and made people fatalistic. The doctrine of Karma on the other hand was brought in to explain the inequalities of life, pain, misery or happiness and joy, and the cause was laid on man's own exertions to evade the

cruel fiat of an All-powerful God. According to the Hindu philosophy, Karma is the expression of the freedom of man; if by my actions I have brought myself to a certain state, it lies also within me to undo my actions and by making new Karma I can determine my future. If by latter-day degeneration when vigour and strength went from national views, this excellent doctrine of Karma was distorted and used to hide the inactivity and inertia of people, it lies with men like the 'Hindu Master of Arts' to purge it of the pedantry which has infested it and place it in its true colour and not seek to shun this excellent and rational doctrine, the mine of strength and justice in its true form, as if it were a poison.

The writer then goes on to argue that Indian philosophy in its pessimistic trend, its tendency towards inaction will make the Indian undergraduate averse to worldly realities. Here again he labours under a gross misconception evidently borrowing his estimate of Indian philosophy from the catechisms of superficial critics of the West who have neither the intellectual breadth nor insight to appreciate cultural ideals besides their own. The highest ideals do not contemplate another world where perfection is to be attained or call this world illusory, or render its works and duties false and nugatory. Our philosophy calls human life as the best of lives, and this world as the best of worlds for here alone can right and unselfish Karma be performed, to break one's bondages and attain freedom,—this is the *Karma-bhumi*, according to our philosophy, and all others are merely *bhoga-bhumis*—to work off the fruits of Karma accumulated here. Sankara in his Vedanta argues against the idealism of the Buddhists, and says that this world

is only absolutely unreal, but phenomenally real; and only by working through it can we break the dream and awaken to reality—as it is said in the Bhagavad Gita—"not without initiating work can one attain to the state beyond work."—Therefore our philosophy understands that as long as we are within this phenomenal world, all continues and its *vyavahara*, its works and duties are as binding on us and as real as anything else. We admit with the writer that due to loss of national vigour false ideas and distorted notions have invaded our minds seeking to cover and apologise for our own weaknesses and inactivity. But the true way of resuscitating the lost vigour will not be found in cutting ourselves off from our culture and going in for other sources which do not belong to us by inheritance, but to divest the excrescence, the poisonous growths which have grown round our philosophy and place them in their true, strong, pure forms. Then its power for good, its intensity of appeal will be increased a hundredfold.

The fact, which the writer urges, that Oriental philosophy has accentuated the tendency towards the abstract, and barren speculations only and has not materialised in active concern in the realities of existence, is also a misstatement. It cannot be said that Hindus have in no part of their history shown greatness in the secular concerns of life. This is shown by their great achievement in secular science and arts, in their maritime activity, their municipal and imperial government, industry, politics, warfare, now being brought to light. Let us quote from a recent writer: "The historical truth is, that the Hindus cast their eyes equally on both wings of human life—they approached the problem

of the universe from both angles of vision. Hindu culture was as much the embodiment of the most intimate experience of the concrete, positive life as the expression of a thorough hair-splitting analysis of the Beyond or the transcendental realities. \* \* \* The young India of to-day is like its illustrious predecessors of mediæval and ancient times, at once idealist and practical." Indeed it might well be asked how a philosophy which has evolved the idea of Karma Yoga, of work as being a method of realising the truth, which also looks upon all work as worship, which has evolved the conception of the Immanent God and His Universal form in the world, can be taxed with as being devoid of potentialities which will stimulate secular endeavour and success in practical life. If for a time the people were, by loss of vigour brought about by many circumstances, thrown too much on speculative absorption, a more all-round development and endeavour in all departments of activity is showing itself, and for this the inspiration is to be found in the contents of our own culture and philosophy, in the grand ideals of Karma-yoga as preached in the Gita and emphasised and restated by Indian reformers like Swami Vivekananda.

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We have finished our remarks and before concluding let us say that we are no blind admirers of Indian systems of philosophy or civilisation, nor do we think that they are not capable of improvement. Neither do we want to see the India of the past, however great and glorious, live again in its old form now. We want to see the strength and glory of ancient India, reinforced by the strength, and wisdom of the present and find new expression in the forms of the present day. That there are

many defective and putrescent parts in our civilisation which have to be excised we admit, we also admit that we need greatly and shall benefit by the greatest exchange of thoughts and comparison of ideals with the West and that we have not done so for sometime has contributed to our present-day degeneration. But to say that there are not sufficient elements of strength and purity and nobility in our culture capable of infusing strength into us and from which we may draw life-giving inspiration, but that we should go for grounding in the principles of life and conduct and for the problems of life to Western philosophy and logic, and the study of our own systems of philosophy may come in afterwards as a corrective, is to pervert the whole perspective and values of things. The attitude of mind revealed by the writer that Indian culture and philosophy is of such a mischievous influence that it is to be shunned like a dangerous contagion and not approached without safeguards is very deplorable, the result of the loss of faith in his own culture without sufficient warrant, due to overmuch of schooling in the "Western science, philosophy and logic" of which he is such a great apologist. Against this attitude of mind and temper we enter our most emphatic protest; and the sooner it disappears and the less it is fostered by our universities the better for the country and its alumni. We find ourselves then at one with His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay's suggestion that Indian philosophy should justly find an important place in the curricula of undergraduate studies in our university side by side with, or posteriorly to Western systems of thought and philosophy, forming part of, the course of university studies.



## FREE WILL AND PREDESTINATION.

Is man a tiny boat in a tempest, raised one moment on the foamy crest of a billow and dashed down into a yawning chasm the next, rolling to and fro at the mercy of good and bad actions—a powerless, helpless wreck in an ever-ranging, ever-rushing, uncompromising current of cause and effect, a little moth placed under the wheel of causation, which rolls on crushing everything in its way, and waits not for the widow's tears or the orphan's cry?—Swami Vivekananda.

**T**HE doctrine of Karma has a wide application and connotation in Indian philosophy. It may mean the whole totality of causes by which the One has become the many, the Nirguna, transcendent Brahman has become manifested as the world of names and forms. In this sense it is coterminous with Maya, in this sense it is said to be *avadi* or existing from the beginning of creation. For the inscrutable power which by producing diversity of names and forms has manifested this visible world from the One, Nirguna, and unmanifested Brahman, must be said to be of the nature of Karma. This Karma once put in operation is unfailing in its actions and does not die without producing its corresponding result. Both the Sankhya and the Vedanta admit that the evolution of the universe from the Primal Nature has taken place in a certain order, according to certain laws—these laws are the laws of nature and they are infallible. Creation means the diversity of names and forms, and this diversity is produced by Karma or the law of causation and the future evolution of names and forms is all determined by the law of causation. Everything that has name and form is bound by this law of causation and as we find name and form

existing already whenever we see creation, we assume that this Karma exists concurrently with creation. By this law of Karma, the sun shines, the wind blows, the earth and the moon are revolving in their orbits, even gods are within this law of Karma. When this law of causation was first brought into operation, how it made the changeless, uncaused Brahman manifest name and forms we cannot say, but we see that once man falls into the net of Karma, the power of Karma is not destroyed but gives rise to a corresponding effect which again in its turn becomes the cause of another effect. The Karma of to-day is the cause of the Karma of to-morrow; and the Karma of to-morrow that of the day after. Once the wheel of Karma has been set in motion, there is no escape from suffering from its effects. According to Indian philosophy even the Lord does not interfere in the working out of Karma but only distributes fruits according to the nature of the Karma. Though we cannot say how Karma first arose and how men first fell into its net, from observing the unfailing effects of Karma,—each reaping as he sows, good, good, bad, bad, we infer that since creation man is held in the iron bondage of this law of causation.

What then becomes of the freedom of the will of man? If nature and its invariable laws are all that exists, then there is not a jot of freedom of the will of man. Whichever way the laws of the universe will draw him, he will have to move, and all ideas of immortality and freedom are mere figments of the imagination. Material philosophers who postulate no spiritual substances independent of matter and its

laws are forced to the conclusion of predestination. If they admit the operation of the laws of nature, it means that each precedent is invariably followed by a subsequent, each effect is produced by a cause which again was produced by another cause. This is Nature. Mind itself, according to these philosophers, being a phenomenon of Nature is as much bound by laws as anything else in the universe. This conformation to laws constitutes the whole rationality of mind. "If our thoughts are not the necessary results of preceding thoughts, if one state is not invariably followed by another which it produces, that mind we should say is irrational." How can the mind be rational i. e. governed by the laws of thought and yet admit of the will of the mind being free?

So it follows that within the phenomenal nature everything is governed by strict, unbending laws. Every thought and action is caused. That I am writing this is as much within causation as that you are reading this. We could not help it; we are forced by nature's laws to do these. The past thoughts that I have thought, the feelings that I have entertained have by their inevitable working out brought me to writing this article; and also your thoughts and feelings have produced in you the irresistible inclination to read this paper. So every thought and action of ours is caused, it is preceded by a chain of causes and effects which inevitably gives rise to that particular thought and action. If the whole of nature, mental or material is thus bound by laws, then we are in a prison of cause and effect, according to material philosophies, in a prison in which matter and its attributes are the fetters which bind us, which we can never overstep; whichever way the material attributes draw us we have to bend. Such is the

invariable conclusion which material philosophers have to come to. How can you deny the operation of laws in nature and call the mind rational, and how can you call the mind rational i. e. acting according to laws and admit of the will being free?

The Buddhist philosophy also in explaining the whole of nature as a series of phenomena governed by a chain of cause and effect, and denying the existence of Soul or an unchanging substance behind, was led to the same conclusion. It says that each cause is produced by an effect and so on in an endless chain and this is sufficient to explain all the phenomena of the universe by the mind and thought and we only perceive phenomena and can get no idea of the unchanging soul behind, which it is gratuitous to assume. But the Buddhists assume that it is possible to break or stop this chain of cause and effect and attain to Nirvana. If all is but a chain of cause and effect, and there is no unchanging substratum then it is impossible for this chain ending itself; for the attempt to break the series of cause and effects will itself be a cause which will produce an effect. Also as an effect cannot overstep its cause, the impulse or motive power to break the chain of causation cannot come from the chain of causation itself; the series of changes can give rise to another series of changes it can never stop the chain of causes. Karma and the cessation of Karma are contradictory in nature, and the cessation of Karma cannot be brought about by means of the causal chain. The Buddhists were led to atheism by their wrong conception of the law of causation. If matter and the changing phenomena held by the law of Karma be sufficient to explain all the facts of life, and it is quite gratuitous to assume the existence of a

noumenon or Substance, then how is Nirvana, the cessation of all phenomena, possible by means of the phenomenal chain?

So far as external investigation goes, which gives us matter and attributes joined to matter, everything in this material world is bound by strict unbending laws and the ever-increasing attempt to explain every phenomena of nature from within, as modes of operation of necessary inherent laws from the nature of things constitute rationalism and the modern scientific temper. If that is so, everything is regulated by law, every action of ours, every thought we think is caused, the necessary result of previous actions and thoughts in an unbroken chain which we cannot resist; everything is necessary. This knocks the bottom out of the sense of responsibility of man in evil-doing, and provides no incentive to endeavour in stopping one course of life or rectifying or initiating another.

Against such a state of mental or actional servitude our moral sense revolts and our nature refuses to be bound by it. On the other hand the consciousness of the freedom of action despite a thousand circumstances thwarting it or putting insurmountable barriers before it constitutes a fundamental belief of his nature, which sustains and enthuses him in the midst of the most unfavourable circumstances. Even if every force of nature is knocking him down and thwarting his will he rises up every time saying to himself, 'Although I am held in bondage by everything around, yet I can somehow free myself.' This conviction of the freedom of man is as fundamental and elementary a belief of his mental constitution and as unexplained and unaccounted for by any fact of material phenomena as the other one of the immortality of his being. Although man

sees facts of death all around, although death is the most sure and patent of all facts, yet he never thinks of dying, and cannot believe that this world will be the end of everything. Similarly although he finds thousands of circumstances in this universe circumscribing his will, presenting dead impassable walls before it, yet he goes on believing that he is free or that he can free himself and this belief is the motive power of all his actions. This mixture of freedom and bondage, of immortality and death constitutes our phenomenal universe, and the basic fact of our life.

Systems of religion or philosophy which postulate the existence of Spirit and Soul behind the changing, the caused and causing facts of the universe avoid this state of *non-possumus*, in which everything is bound by the causal chain, every act or thought is caused, leaving no room for human initiative and endeavour,—the conclusion to which every material philosophy denying the existence of Spirit or the Free Soul behind the phenomenal universe is bound to come.

The Vedanta in postulating the existence of a spiritual principle affected by nothing shows the way out of the deadlock of action of material philosophers like Haeckel and the rest. It says that the phenomenal universe is but a fraction of the Infinite Brahman, the uncaused, the unchanging substance projected on the plane of the intellect, and thrown into the mould of time, space and causation. The Brahman or the Atman of man is always free, never bound, can never be bound, but when It somehow mistakenly identifies Itself with names and forms, with mind and matter, and with the meshes of time, space and causation, It is held by the law of causation and comes under its operation. The consciousness of freedom

which as we have seen is a fundamental trait of the human constitution is the freedom of Soul percolating through layers of matters. It is the glimpse of the infinite blue sky behind masses of clouds. Therefore is it that the consciousness of freedom persists in the midst of the bondage of matter, and laughs at all the bondage that we may cast round it. The presence of the Infinite, Free Soul explains the motive-power which man feels to break the chain of Karma; for this motive-power to attain to freedom from the chain of Karma cannot be explained by the law of causation; as an effect cannot transcend its cause, the bondage of the causal chain cannot give rise to the motive-power to break it and be free. The free agency is therefore of the Atman, but by identifying Itself with the ephemeral names and forms of the universe It becomes bound and is dragged from Karma to Karma. And by the effects of pain, by the experience of the facts of bondage and slavery in which It finds Itself, by identifying itself with the mind, the innate Freedom of Atman, which is never lost is roused to self-conscious activity. As It is in itself superior to the causal chain it stands apart, judges the operation of Karma, how from one Karma It is dragged to another; its knowledge is roused, It gives the impulsion contrary to Karma, starts and initiates work negativing the effect of past Karma or initiating new Karma for the present. If no spiritual principle such as the Atman ever Free and unbound were admitted as always present, then it is impossible to stand aside from the causal sequence, and attempt either to regulate it, or introduce new factors into it or altogether to stop it; man himself being then an effect of the law of causation would fall in the stream of causation

and go from one Karma to another and would have no independence. Eastern philosophers on the other hand admit a Free Soul at the basis of the whole phenomenal universe which is never bound by it but always remains, Free, Infinite and beyond it. From this Soul comes the impulsion to break the chain of Karma (as all its impulsions are conducive to the regaining of its nature—viz. of Freedom, Oneness, Purity and Immortality); from the phenomenal world comes the impulsion to prolong the causal chain. The two forces, the freedom of the soul and the bondage of the unbounded laws of nature are both facts of the universe, and act and react upon each other. The causal sequence is materially altered and modified by the action of the Spirit. By following the suggestion of the Soul, man succeeds in regulating or transcending the law of causation and being free.

Therefore according to Indian philosophy the law of causation governs but a fraction of the nature of man—that projected on the plane of sense and caught in the meshes of names and forms. Within this it is all bondage, everything governed by laws. From the Atman comes the motive power to break this chain of causation and by following the suggestion and impulsion of the Atman which are towards freedom, and oneness, and by starting and initiating new work besides the causal sequence he succeeds in breaking and rising superior to it. At last by giving up all identification with names and forms, he stands apart from the stream of Karma and established in the Atman, in the state of perfection he is able to control Karma completely, to initiate, alter, modify everything without his being bound by its effects or drawn into the vortex of causation.

## EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(Translated from Bengali.)

## CXXXVIII.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

1894.

My dear Akhandananda,

I am very glad to receive your letter. It is a great pleasure to me to learn that you have regained your health to a great extent by your stay at Khetri.

T— has done a good deal of work in Madras. Very agreeable news indeed! I heard much praise of him from the people of Madras.

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Try to develop spirituality and philanthropy amongst the Thakurs in the different places of Rajputana. We must work, and this cannot be done by merely sitting idle. Make a trip now and then to Malsisor, Alsisor, and all the other 'saïs' that are there. And carefully learn Sanskrit and English. G— is in the Punjab, I presume. Convey my special love to him and bring him to Khetri. Learn Sanskrit with his help, and teach him English. Let me have his address by any means.

\* \* \* \*

Go from door to door amongst the poor and lower classes of the town of Khetri and teach them religion. Also, let them have oral lessons on geography and such other subjects. No good will come of sitting idle and having princely dishes, and saying "Ramakrishna, O Lord!"—unless you can do some good to the poor. Go to other villages from time to time and teach the people the arts of life as well as religion. Work, worship and Jnanam (knowledge)—

first work and your mind will be purified; otherwise everything will be fruitless like pouring oblations on a pile of ashes instead of in the sacred fire. When G— comes, move from door to door of the poor and the destitute in every village of Rajputana. If people object to the kind of food you take, give it up immediately. It is preferable to live on grass for the sake of doing good to others. The *gerrua* robe is not for enjoyment. It is the banner of heroic work. You must give your body, mind and speech to "the welfare of the world." You have read—मातृदेवो भव, पितृदेवो भव—"Look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as God,"—but I say, "दरिद्रदेवो भव, मूर्खदेवो भव"—The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted—let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.

Ever yours, with blessings,

Vivekananda.

## CXXXIX.

228 W. 39.

New York, 17th Jan., '95.

Dear—

Your two letters are to hand, as also the two of R— Babu. I have got the bill of lading, but it will be long before the goods arrive. Unless one arranges for the prompt despatch of goods they take about six months to come. It is four months since H— wrote that the *Rudraksha* beads and *kusha* mats had been despatched, but there is no news of their whereabouts yet. The thing is, when the goods reach England, the agent of the company here gives me notice, and about a

month later, the goods arrive. I received your bill of lading about three weeks ago, but no sign of the notice! Only the goods sent by Raja of K— arrive quickly. Most probably he spends a lot of money after them. However, it is a matter of congratulation that goods do arrive without fail in this region of Pátála, at the other end of the globe. I shall let you know as soon as the goods come. Now keep quiet for at least three months! \* \*

Now is the time for you to apply yourself to start the magazine. Tell R— Babu that though the gentleman of whom he speaks be a competent person, I am not in a position to have anybody in America at present. \* \* What about your article on Tibet? When it is published in the Mirror, send me a copy. \* \* Come, here is a task for you, conduct that magazine. Thrust it on people and make them subscribe to it, and don't be afraid. What work do you expect from men of little hearts?—Nothing in the world! You must have an iron will if you would cross the ocean. You must be strong enough to pierce mountains. I am coming next winter, We shall set the world on fire,—let those who will, join us and be blessed, and those that won't come, would lag behind for ever and ever; let them do so. You gird up your loins and keep yourself ready. \* \* Never mind anything! In your lips and hands the Goddess of Learning will make Her seat; the Lord of infinite power will be seated on your chest; you will do works that will strike the world with wonder. By the bye, can't you shorten your name a bit, my boy? What a long, long name!—a single name enough to fill a volume! Well, you hear people say that the Lord's name keeps away death! It is not the simple name 'Hari,' mind you. It is those deep and sonorous names, such as अघभग्नरकविनाशन (Destroyer of Agha, Bhaga, and Naraka), त्रिपुरमदभञ्जन (Subduer of the pride of Tripura, demon of the "three cities"), and अशंपनिःशेषकल्पानकर

(Giver of infinite and endless blessings) and so forth—that put to route King Death and his whole party. Won't it look nice if you simplify yours a little? But it is too late, I am afraid, as it has already been abroad. But, believe me, it is a world-entrancing, death-defying name that you have got! +

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda.

P. S. Throw the whole of Bengal and, for the matter of that, the whole of India into convulsion! Start centres at different places.

The Bhagavatam has reached me—a very nice edition indeed, but people of this country have not the least inclination for studying Sanskrit, hence there is very little hope for its sale. There may be a little in England, for, there many are interested in the study of Sanskrit. Give my special thanks to the editor. I hope his noble attempt will meet with complete success. I shall try my best to push his book here. I have sent his prospectus to different places. Tell R— Babu that a flourishing trade can be set on foot with England and America in *mālūg dāl*, *arhar dāl* &c. *Dāl* soup will have a go if properly introduced. There will be a good demand for them if they be sent from house to house, in small packets, with directions for cooking on them and a depot started for storing a quantity of them. Similarly *Barhis* + too will have a good market. We want an enterprising spirit. Nothing is done by leading idle lives. If any one forms a company and exports Indian goods here and into England, it will be a good trade. But they are a lazy set. \* \*

+ The full name which Swami Trigunatita, to whom this letter was addressed, bore at first was "Swami Trigunatitananda,"—hence the Swamiji's pleasantry about it.

‡ Made of dāl pounded into a paste, beaten, and made into pellets.

## A VISIT TO THE LORD'S FARM.

(REMINISCENCES.)\*

**A**BOUT twenty-five miles from New York City, on the main line to Paterson is a small railway station called Woodcliff. And about a mile from the station is a farm, called the Lord's Farm. It was with the intention of paying a visit to this farm that we, three friends, alighted at the Woodcliff station one beautiful Saturday evening in May or June, many years ago. We were in the State of New Jersey, a beautiful agricultural country, spotted with farms of different size. Every place looked prosperous, with good buildings and well-kept orchards. The Lord's Farm, we found, made no exception. The house and barn were in first class condition and the twenty-five acres of ground were in splendid trim. The main produce of the place consisted of a large variety of choice fruits, vegetables and hay. In the stable we found six well-fed and well-groomed horses. There were no other animals on the place, no cows, no dog, not even a cat. In this respect the place was different from others of its kind, for no farmer in any well-settled part of America will be without his milk cow, his four-footed companion the dog and a cat to keep the vermin down. The reason for this rather singular omission on an otherwise so well-equipped a farm will be clear later on. But let us first make acquaintance with the inhabitants of the place. For it was not to see the farm or the animals that we had decided to spend a week-end at the Lord's Farm. It was to meet the people living there, of whom strange reports had reached us through the newspapers, who seemed to take delight in picturing these good people as religious cranks.

In America, and perhaps more or less in every civilised country, it is difficult to escape the newspaper reporter, as soon as one deviates, be it ever so little, from the trodden path of convention. What to speak of the Lord's Farm people for whom the word convention had no meaning, who walked not according to the ordinary custom of

man, but who were guided by the dictates of their hearts and a refined conscience, or, as they themselves expressed it, by the Voice of God. That such people were considered as eccentric by their neighbours, need not surprise us. They are eccentric in so far as they step aside from the usual course followed by man. All saints are eccentric,—they are not like ordinary people, they stand on a different platform, they act from different motives. But when this eccentricity expresses itself in outward signs, the consequences have to be met. And so our good friends of the Lord's Farm had to meet the ridicule and often the ill-will of those who did not understand their motives.

In appearance the three or four male members of the happy family reminded us of the patriarchs of the Old Testament, on account of their long hair and beards. Otherwise they looked like ordinary farmers. The woman, sister of one of the men, was of the New England type, a beautiful, open face, with regular features. None were married. The dress was of the simplest pattern and every thing looked neat and clean.

Ceremonies were not observed. We were welcomed in a simple manner and seats were offered us. "Well, friends, who are ye," said one of the men. We introduced ourselves, but before we had gone the round, we were told that they did not care whether we were Mr. or Mrs. or Miss so and so. "Just tell us your first names," they said, "for we call everyone by his or her Christian name."

"Oh, your name is Cornelius and your name Henry and your name Marion? That will do. We will call you by these names. And this is Blaudine, and this is John and here is Titus. My name is Mnason."

"No! not Mr. Mnason, just simply Mnason. Would it not have sounded strange, if Jesus had addressed his brethren as Mr. John and Mr. Peter? We follow his example and we regard all people alike; we make no distinctions. And we do not

\* With apology for free rendering and inaccuracies. I have no notes to refresh my memory.

look upon you as strangers. Whoever enters this place is looked upon as sent by the Lord, for this is His farm. We only live here as His stewards, but the place belongs to Him. So every one who enters here has the same rights and privileges. The place belongs as much to you as it belongs to us. So be perfectly at home. And now the food is on the table and every one is welcome to sit down and help himself. No ceremonies, remember. Take what you want and take plenty of it. The Lord has always kept us in abundance.

"Why, Cornelius, dost not thee † like the food? Oh, I see, there is no carcass. That we have given up long ago. I used to eat dead bodies, but the Lord told me to stop it. So no flesh ever appears on this table.

"Oh, ye are vegetarians? Well, then it is nothing strange to thee.

"Salt and pepper? No, we do not use anything to tickle the nerves or to feed the animal tendency in man. The Lord does not want us to use spices or anything that comes from an animal. So we do not even keep a cow. The less we have to do with animals the better. If we could employ electricity, we would not have the horses either. That may come in time. But as long as we have to use horses, we take good care of them."

"But Mnason," one of us remarked, "butter and milk are wholesome and nourishing food!"

"Yea, my friend, that may be so. But the Lord told Blaudine, in a dream, no to take it. So she gave it up. And then we thought that if the Lord wanted her to renounce it, it would perhaps please Him, if we all did so. So one after the other, we let it go. And we feel none the worse for it. You see, we have a kingly table after all, so many kinds of vegetables and fruits and peanut butter. And John used to be a baker. Taste his bread, it is made of whole wheat. Is not it good? And all the food has its natural flavor and it is pure and sweet.

"No, we do not smoke. The Lord would not have it. Once I disobeyed and the Lord hid Himself from me. How I suffered! First I did not know why the Lord did not speak to me any more.

<sup>†</sup> Thee, thou and ye, I think, were used rather indiscriminately as also the corresponding verb-endings. 'You,' was never used.

I was very miserable. Then I prayed and I said to the Lord: 'Lord, art Thou angry with me? Why dost Thou hide Thyself from me?'

"Now, the Lord had told me to give up smoking. So I gave up smoking cigars. But a cigarette now and then, I thought, would not hurt. But when I prayed to the Lord, what do ye think happened? Well, would ye believe it, there was a big cigarette standing in front of me. It was in a vision. 'My Lord!' I said, 'does this miserable cigarette stand between Thee and me? That will soon end.' And I ran outside, for I was praying in a church, and I took all the cigarettes I had in my pocket and threw them on the pavement. Then I began to jump on them and to crush them with my feet till they were dust. Some boys saw me do this and they said: 'Mister, what are you doing? Give us the cigarettes.' But I said: 'Nay, my boys, they are from the devil, they took me away from God.' The boys thought me mad and they ran away. That was the last of my smooking."

Mnason looked like a man of about fifty. One of our party asked him how old he was. "I have no age, my friend," was the reply, "I am from eternity to eternity, for I do not count this body. It is God, the Father, who dwells here. And He is beyond age."

"But, Mnason," I ventured, "this is the same as saying that you are God. And God is all-knowing. Then you also must be all-knowing."

"Now, Cornelius, what art thou saying? Yea, God is all-knowing and *I am also all-knowing*. But through this temple, God does not know every thing of worldly affairs. That belongs to the creature man. Ye see, this body was only six months in school, so it does not know much about your books and philosophies. But *I know that I am the eternal Spirit*. Jesus knew that he was the son of God, one with the Father. But he did not know your sciences. Still, he was God. And he knew it.

"People get angry when I tell them that I am one with the Father,—the Truth that is and was and always will be. They call me a blasphemer and they persecute me. Once a party of church-people came after me. They were holding a revival meeting. I knew these people. They were preaching the highest Truth, but they lived according to the flesh. I could not endure it. So

I got up in the meeting and told them that they were hypocrites and that they would go to hell if they did not change their ways. They got so angry that they threw me in the street. I entered the meeting again and repeated what I had said. Then they called a policeman and had me arrested for disturbing the peace. And I had to spend three days in jail.

"When I came out of jail, I went to their meeting again, but I kept silent. But they became furious seeing me and they said that they would teach me a lesson. Well, a few days later, when I was walking in the street, it was in a small town, a party of men took hold of me. One of them said: 'You say you are God?' 'Yea, Hallelujah!' I replied. Then he struck me a blow in the face. 'Say it again!' he said. I replied: 'Yea, amen, I am He.' Then they took a rope, tied my hands and dragged me to a secluded spot where they were going to tar and feather † me. I shouted all the time: 'Praise the Lord!' They kicked me and beat me, but I could not remain silent. Then they put me on a box and said: 'Repeat it again and we will apply the tar.' 'Friends,' I said, 'I shall praise my Lord as long as I live. If ye want me to keep silent, ye will have to cut out my tongue. And if ye do that and ye kill me, I shall take another body and I shall speak the same truth.' I do not know why, but to my surprise they untied my hands and let me go free."

"But Mnason," I said, "have you no fear?"

"I have only one fear, Cornelius," he replied. "I fear fear. I fear that sometimes fear may overtake me, when doing the will of the Father. But as long as I obey Him, I fear nothing. The Lord is my Beloved, how can I fear? No one can separate us, we are eternally united. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me.'

"Now, let us step inside. Would thee like to hear a song? Blaudine is my song book. She knows many songs. Come, we will sing together."

We went inside. Mnason and Blaudine sang together, Mnason playing softly on a small organ. It sounded very sweet. But sweeter than the songs was the expression on Mnason's face. He looked

inspired. Blaudine had a clear voice. Her appearance was simple, pure and holy.

"Ever Thine, Thine alone

Yes Beloved, Thine I'll be.

It is in life my one ambition

Day and night to live in Thee."

These were the last lines.

I asked, where they got the songs from, for I did not remember having ever heard them before.

"They came to me at different times," Mnason said. "Some have come to me in jail, for I was put in jail several times. I had nothing to do there but talk to the Lord. And He gave me these songs. I had a lovely time in jail. The Spirit was always with me. Ah! What ecstasies, what revelations came to me! How many days and nights I have spent in close communion with God! I hardly knew where I was or what I was doing. The jailer thought that there was something wrong with me and he called the prison doctor. And when the doctor came I spoke to him about God.

"But I have been much persecuted, for I always do and speak, as the Spirit leads me. So, sometimes I have to be rude and hurt people's feelings. I have to address every one with 'thee' and 'thou' and persons in high position get offended. They want to be treated with great respect and to see their titles used when they are addressed. But I cannot do that. I would speak the same to the President as I do to the poorest beggar. So, many times false charges were brought against me and I was never left in peace. I used to feel sorely grieved. Then, one day, I spoke to the Lord and said: 'Lord, this world is a wicked place. I want to do thine will, but people would not let me. I have no place where to go at night and when I am found in the street moneyless they lock me up. Give me a place where I can live in peace. There is no freedom in this world. Give me a place and every one who comes there will be free to do and speak as he likes. It will be a place of perfect freedom!'

"The Lord granted my prayer. First He led me to the house of Titus. I knew Titus and I loved him for his purity and simplicity. One day he told me that he had a sister who was ill and asked me to see her. I went to their home and seeing Blaudine I was moved to lay my hands on her head. She said: 'What is this? I feel better.'

<sup>†</sup> A punishment inflicted by smearing a person with heated tar and then covering him with feathers.

From that moment she began to recover her health. Many people were cured that way. But the spirit told me to stop it. People used to come to me with handkerchiefs or other small things belonging to sick people. I would touch the articles and the patients would get cured. Then, one day, a man came to me and said: 'Mnason, we can make a fine business out of that. I shall rent a nice office and there the people can come and you can cure them, charging a fee.' I got very angry. 'Shame on thee,' I said, 'to sell God's power! Did Jesus take money for healing the sick?'

"Well, Titus had this farm. But it was dreadfully neglected. No one lived there. He told me about the place and expressed his wish that we three should live there. I saw the hand of God in this, so I consented. And we have been here ever since. It does not look like the old place now. We have worked awfully hard to remove the stones and put it in shape."

"Later on, John came and joined us. He used to do a good deal of street-preaching. And he spoke as the Lord gave him to speak. But John looks so funny, with his long beard and hair and his short stature, that the boys used to make fun of him. They would pull his hair and beard. But John would only smile at them and go on preaching. Sometimes they would pull off his hat and run away with it. But John only smiled. And the boys always came back after a while and returned the hat. He never got angry. He says, the Lord does all these things. Here, he is happy and he can do and talk just as he likes."

"Some time ago, John went to Paterson for a wagon-load of coal for our winter supply. He had a long distance to go and we expected him back in the evening. At last he came up the road, but he did not turn in here. He went right on. An hour or so later he came back with the empty wagon. 'John,' I said, 'what hast thou done with the coal?' Then he began to laugh and said: 'Oh, I have had such fun. Here I came with the coal and I was just about to turn in the gate when the Lord said: 'John, where art thou going?' 'Well, Lord,' I said, 'I have come back with the coal.' Then the Lord said: 'Drive on, John, do not go in the gate.' 'Yea Lord,' I said, and I drove on. Then I came to the little house where the people are so poor. 'John,' said the Lord,

'thou knowest these people are poor. And they have no coal for the winter. Better give them the coal.' 'Yea, Lord,' I said, 'Thy will be done.' And so I went to the house and told the people that the Lord had sent them a wagon-load of coal. You ought to have seen their faces. They did not know what to say or to do. I said: 'Well, good people, where shall I put the coal?' They thought that something was wrong and they kept silent looking at each other. But I looked around and found a place and there I dumped the coal. It was such fun! They said: 'Thank you, John, but we did not order any coal!' Then I told them what the Lord had done. And they said: 'Praise the Lord.' I said 'The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.' And then I came away."

"Now," said Mnason, after telling the story, "was not that fine? And you know, it is more blessed to give than to receive."

In later years I discovered for myself how exceedingly charitable, generous and honest these people were in all their dealings.

Once I asked Mnason: "Do you worship Jesus?"

"I worship only the Father, which is God, the Eternal Truth," he replied. "But we must all become like Jesus, sons of God. In the Father we must all become united. In my earlier career I had many visions of Jesus. I used to see him and talk with him. It was glorious! And sometimes the apostles would come to me and sometimes angels."

"I used to be very clever at wood-carving. So once I made a very beautiful image of Jesus. After much labour it was finished and I loved that little image. But it was soon taken away from me. One day I was looking at it with great tenderness. Then the Voice spoke to me. 'Mnason,' It said, 'dost thou want an image or dost thou want me?' I said: Nay, my Lord, I want Thee!' Then I understood that I was giving my love to a piece of wood. And I remembered that 'God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' I took the image and broke it to pieces. Ye see, God is a jealous God. He wants to possess us altogether. But it is so sweet to be His and His alone."

"One day I had a very wonderful experience. Jesus came to me and I was filled with such a joy that I could scarcely endure it. In extreme ecstasy I became dead to the world. I knew nothing but him. Then this beautiful figure began to melt away as light, spreading in all directions. Then I became united with that light and I lost all sense of separateness. There was neither Jesus nor Mnason,—only the One Spirit of Truth. Then I knew that I was the same Spirit that spoke through Jesus and that there is only the One Spirit. And that Spirit now speaks through this mouth and acts through this temple. After that I did not see Jesus so much. Cornelius, what shall I tell thee! Those that have ears to hear, let them hear. To others I shall be an offence."

There was a long silence. Mnason seemed lost in memory and we dared not break the spell. At last he said : "But the Voice is never silent. Lo, He is with me always. And I always obey the Voice."

"Will you tell us, Mnason, how the Voice first spoke to you?" "Yea," he said, "I will tell thee."

But our week-end was spent and the story had to be kept over for a future occasion. We woke up to the fact that there was but just time to catch our train and to ask the holy man's blessing and his permission to visit them again.

On our way home we compared notes. "What do you think of them?" asked one of us. Another replied : "They are good people, but they are so

fanatic. Why can't they act like other people? I see no sense in letting your hair and beard grow long and making yourself the laughing-stock for every one. It is foolish. They are hospitable and I am glad that we went, but I am not going again."

"Well," said the third, "You may call them fanatic and foolish, but do you remember what St. Paul said? 'We are fools for Christ's sake.' Is not it the same with them? They are told by the Spirit to do these things. They walk in perfect obedience to God's will. Their love for God, their trust in Him, their courage and sincerity,—I think it is marvellous. And Mnason's realisations are wonderful. I was thrilled when he told us how he realised his oneness with the Spirit. And I believe him to be genuine, not simply a talker. He is an illiterate man, he knows nothing of Vedanta or philosophy, he never heard of such realisations and still he experienced them. That seems so remarkable to me. He has experienced Truth and he lives up to his belief. I also do not like these outward things. But what does it matter? They are sincere and that is the one thing that matters. Anyhow their lives are holy and pure. And I like them. I want to go again."

"All right," said the first speaker, "I am with you. I also believe them to be perfectly sincere. I enjoyed our visit immensely. Let us go again."

And so, the following Saturday afternoon, we two took the train again and paid our second visit to the Lord's Farm.

GURUDASA.

## VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from page 163.)

उच्छ्रासनिःश्वासविजृम्भणभुत्-  
प्रस्थन्दनाद्युत्कमणादिकाः क्रियाः ।  
प्रणादिकर्मणि वदन्ति तज्ज्ञाः ।  
प्राणस्य धर्मावशनापिपासे ॥१०२॥

102. Inhalation and exhalation, yawning, sneezing, secretion, and leaving this body etc. are called by experts functions of Prána and the rest, while hunger and

thirst are characteristics of Prána proper.

अन्तःकरणमेतेषु चक्षुरादिषु वर्षणि ।  
अहमित्यभिमानेन तिष्ठत्याभासतेजसा ॥१०३॥

103. The inner organ (mind) has its seat in the organs such as the eye etc., as well as in the body, identifying itself with them and endowed with a reflection of the Atman.

**अहङ्कारः स विशेषः कर्ता भोक्ता भिमान्ययम् ।  
सत्त्वादिगुणयोगेन चावस्थात्रयमश्चते ॥१०४॥**

104. Know that it is Egoism which, identifying itself with the body, becomes the doer or enjoyer and in conjunction with the Gunas such as the Sattva, assumes the three different states.

[*Gunas*—the three component factors of Prakriti.  
*Different states*—those of waking etc.]

**विषयाणामानुकूल्ये सुखी तुःखी विपर्यये ।  
सुखं तुःखं च तद्वर्मः सदानन्दस्य नात्मनः ॥१०५॥**

105. When the sense-objects are favourable it becomes happy, and it becomes miserable when the case is contrary. So happiness and misery are the characteristics of egoism, and not of the ever-blissful Atman.

**आत्मार्थेत्वेन हि प्रेयान्विषयो न स्वतः प्रिय ।  
स्वत एव हि सर्वेषामात्मा प्रियतमो यतः ।**

**तत आत्मा सदानन्दो नास्य तुःखं कदाचन ॥१०६॥**

106. Sense-objects are pleasurable only as dependent on the Atman manifesting through them, and not independently, because the Atman is by its very nature the most beloved of all. Therefore the Atman is ever blissful, and never suffers misery.

[*Vide* Bri. Upa.—Yâjnavalkya's teachings to his wife Maitreyi.]

**यत्सुषुप्तौ निर्विषय आत्मानन्दोऽनुभूयते ।  
श्रुतिप्रत्यक्षमैतिह्यमनुमानं च जाग्रति ॥१०७॥**

107. That in profound sleep we experience the bliss of Atman independent of sense-objects, is clearly attested by Sruti, direct perception, tradition, and inference.

[*Sruti*—Chhândoga, Brihadâranyaka, Kausitaki and other Upanishads.]

*Jâgrat*—is a plural verb.]

**अद्यक्तनाम्नी परमेषणकि-  
रनाद्यविद्या त्रिगुणात्मिका परा ।  
कार्यानुमेया सुविधैव माया  
यया जगत्सर्वमिदं प्रसूयते ॥१०८॥**

108. Avidya (Nescience) or Maya, called also the Undifferentiated, is the power of the Lord. It is without beginning, is made up of the three Gunas and is superior to the effects (as their cause). She is to be inferred by one of clear intellect only from the effects She produces. It is She who brings forth this whole universe.

[*The Undifferentiated*—the perfectly balanced state of the three Gunas, where there is no manifested universe. When this balance is disturbed, then evolution begins.]

*Power of the Lord*.—This distinguishes the Vedantic conception of Maya from the Sankhya view of Prakriti which they call insentient and at the same time independent.]

**सञ्चाप्यसञ्चाप्युभयात्मिका नो ।  
भिन्नाप्यभिन्नाप्युभयात्मिका नो ।**

**साङ्गाप्यनङ्गा ह्युभयात्मिका नो  
महाद्वृताऽनिर्वचनीयरूपा ॥१०६॥**

109. She is neither existent nor non-existent nor partaking of both characters; neither same nor different nor both;—neither composed of parts nor an indivisible whole nor both; She is most wonderful and cannot be described in words.

**शुद्धाद्वयब्रह्मविवोधनाशया ।  
सर्पभ्रमो रज्जुविवेकतो यथा ।**

**रजस्तमःसत्त्वमिति प्रसिद्धा**

**गुणास्तदीयाः प्रथितैः स्वकार्यैः ॥११०॥**

110. This Maya can be destroyed by the realisation of the pure Brahman, the one without a second, just as the mistaken idea of a snake is removed by the discrimination of the rope. She has her Gunas known as Rajas, Tamas and Sattva, named after their respective functions.

**विद्येपरक्ती रजसः क्रियात्मिका**

**यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसूता पुराणी ।**

**रागादयोऽस्याः प्रभवन्ति नित्यं ।**

**तुःखादयो ये मनसो विकाराः ॥१११॥**

111. Rajas has its Vikshepa-Shakti or projecting power which is of the nature of an activity, and from which this primeval flow of activity has emanated. From this also, the mental modifications such as attachment and the rest and grief and the like are continually produced.

[ *Vikshepa-shakti*—that power which at once projects a new form when once the real nature of a thing has been veiled by the *avarana-shakti*, mentioned later in Sloka 113.]

*Primeval flow etc.*—i. e. the phenomenal world, alternately evolving and going back into an involved state. Cf. Gita xv. 4.]

कामः क्रोधो लोभदम्भाद्यसूया-  
जह्नुरेष्यमत्सराद्यास्तु घोराः ।  
धर्मा पते राजसाः पुम्प्रवृत्ति-  
र्यसादेषा तद्ग्रजो बन्धहेतुः ॥११॥

112. Lust, anger, avarice, arrogance, spite, egoism, envy and jealousy etc.—these are the dire attributes of Rajas, from which this worldly tendency of man is produced. Therefore Rajas is a cause of bondage.

एषाऽऽवृतिर्नाम तमोगुणस्य,  
शक्तिर्या वस्त्ववभासतेऽन्यथा ।  
सैषा निदानं पुरुषस्य संस्कृते-  
र्विचेपणके: प्रवणस्य हेतुः ॥१२॥

113. *Avriti* or the veiling power is the power of Tamas which makes things appear other than what they are. It is this that causes man's repeated transmigrations, and starts the action of the projecting power (Vikshepa).

प्रक्षावानपि परिहृतोऽपि चतुरोऽप्यत्यन्तसूक्ष्मात्मह-  
ग्व्याखीडस्तमसा न धेति वद्युधा संबोधितोऽपि  
स्फुटम् ।

आन्त्यारोपितमेव साधु कलयत्याकम्बते तदगुणान्  
हन्तासौ प्रबला दुरन्ततमसः शक्तिर्महत्यावृतिः ॥

114. Even wise and learned men and men who are clever and adepts in the vision of the exceedingly subtle Atman are

overpowered by Tamas and do not understand the Atman even though clearly explained in various ways. What is simply superimposed by delusion, they consider as true, and attach themselves to its effects. Alas! How powerful is the great *Avriti* Shakti of dreadful Tamas!

अभावना वा विपरीतभावनाऽ-

संभावना विप्रतिपत्तिरस्याः ।

संसर्गयुक्तं न विमुच्यते ध्रुवं

विचेपणकः क्षपयत्यजस्तम् ॥१३॥

115. Absence of right judgment, or contrary judgment, want of definite belief and doubt—these certainly never desert one who has any connection with this “veiling power” and then the “projecting power” gives ceaseless trouble.

[ *Want of definite belief*—in the existence of a thing even though there may be a vague notion of it. ]

अज्ञानमालस्यजडत्वनिद्रा-

प्रमादमूढत्वमुखास्तमोगुणाः ।

पतैः प्रयुक्तो नहि धेति किञ्चि-

निद्रालुचत्स्तमभवदेव तिष्ठति ॥१४॥

116. Ignorance, lassitude, dulness, sleep, inadvertence and stupidity etc. are attributes of Tamas. One tied to these does not comprehend anything but remains like one asleep or like a stock or stone.

[ *Stock or stone*—lit. pillar. ]

सत्त्वं विशुद्धं जलवत्सथापि,

तात्पर्यं मिलित्वा सरणाय कल्पते ।

यत्रात्मविम्बः प्रतिविम्बितः सन्

प्रकाशयत्वर्कं इवाक्षिलं जडम् ॥१५॥

117. Pure Sattva is (clear) like water, yet in conjunction with Rajas and Tamas makes for transmigration. A glimpse of the Atman becomes reflected in the Sattva and like the sun reveals the entire world of matter.

मिश्रस्य सत्त्वस्य भवन्ति धर्मा-  
स्वमानिताद्या नियमा यमाद्याः ।  
श्रद्धा च भक्तिश्च मुमुक्षुता च  
दैवी च सम्पत्तिरसनिवृत्तिः ॥१८॥

118. The traits of mixed Sattva are an utter absence of pride etc. and Niyamas and Yama etc., as well as faith, devotion, yearning for liberation, the divine tendencies and turning away from the unreal.

[ *Absence of pride etc.* The reference is to the higher attributes enumerated in the Bhagavad-Gita XIII. 8-12.

*Yama*—Non-killing, truthfulness etc. *Niyama*—Purity, contentment etc. Vide Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms III. 30 & 32.

*Divine tendencies*—The reference is to the opening Slokas of Gita, Ch. XVI.]

विशुद्धसत्त्वस्य गुणाः प्रसादः  
स्वात्मानुभूतिः परमा प्रशान्तिः ।  
दृष्टिः प्रहर्षः परमात्मनिष्ठा  
यथा सदानन्दरसं समृच्छति ॥१९॥

119. The traits of pure Sattva are cheerfulness, the realisation of one's own Self, supreme peace, contentment, bliss, and steady devotion for the Atman, by which the aspirant enjoys bliss everlasting.

[ *Pure Sattva*—Sattva unmixed with Rajas and Tamas elements.]

अव्यक्तमेतत्रिगुणैर्निरुक्तं  
तत्कारणं नाम शरीरमात्मनः ।  
सुषुप्तिरेतस्य विभक्तवस्था  
प्रलीनसर्वेन्द्रियबुद्धिवृत्तिः ॥२०॥

120. This Undifferentiated spoken of as the compound of the three Gunas is the causal body of the soul. Profound sleep is its special state, in which the functions of the mind and all its organs are suspended.

[ *Undifferentiated—Avyaktam*, mentioned in Sloka 108 and following.

*Of the soul*—identifying itself through ignorance with this or the other two bodies

*The functions.....suspended—not in perfect*

knowledge as in Samadhi, but in ignorance. This is the differentia between these two states.]

सर्वप्रकारप्रमितिप्रशान्तिः-  
र्धीजात्मनावस्थितिरेव बुद्धेः ।

सुषुप्तिरेतस्य किञ्च प्रतीतिः  
किञ्चिच्च वेद्धीति जगत्प्रसिद्धेः ॥२१॥

121. Profound sleep is the cessation of all kinds of perception, in which the mind remains in a subtle, seed-like form. The test of this is the universal verdict that I did not know anything then.

[ *All kinds of perception*—including remembrance and delusion also.

*The universal verdict &c.*—This negative remembrance proves the continuity of the mind even in the sushupti state.]

देहेन्द्रियप्राणामनोऽहमाद्यः  
सर्वे विकारा विषयाः सुखाद्यः ।  
ध्योमादिभूतान्यथिलं च विश्व-  
मव्यक्तपर्यन्तमिदं श्वनात्मा ॥२२॥

122. The body and the organs, the Pranas, Manas and Egoism etc., all forms of function, the sense-objects, pleasures and the rest, the gross elements such as the ether and so forth, in fact, the whole universe, up to the Undifferentiated—all this is Not-self.

[ This, and the next Sloka set forth what we are to avoid identifying ourselves with. We are the Pure Self, eternally free from all duality.]

माया मायाकार्यं सर्वं महदादिदेहपर्यन्तम् ।  
असदिदमनात्मतत्त्वं विद्धि त्वं मरुमरीचिका-  
कल्पम् ॥२३॥

123. From Mahat down to the gross body everything is the effect of Maya : These and Maya Herself know thou to be Non-self and therefore unreal like the mirage in a desert.

[ *Mahat*.—Cosmic Intelligence. It is the first to proceed from Prakriti or Maya. For the hierarchy vide Katha Upa. I. iii. 10-11. ]

( To be continued. )

REVIEWS  
AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

*The Hermit*—is a new monthly magazine published from Lucknow devoted to a wide range of subjects such as Yoga, Tantra, Vedanta, Sankhya, Mysticism, Spiritualism, Astrology, Mesmerism, Clairvoyance, Theosophy, New Thought etc. Some of the articles are remarkably short; indeed there is an attempt to include all sorts of nondescript matters from all sources bearing on these subjects. The wide variety of its articles gives it a catholic character, but a large number of short excerpts and references brought together without any underlying unity, give it a rather fragmentary and scrappy aspect. Nevertheless some of the articles bearing on subjects of essential interest in religion and philosophy connected with high and fruitful living are both instructive and beneficial for study. But these are swamped by a considerable portion of reading matter dealing with mere occult or psychic phenomena, appealing only to the *curious* and spectacular in man and looked upon in real religious life as bye-products of spiritual life. If it is the desire of the promoters of this magazine to help the cause of true religion and philosophy so as to make it an element of strength and noble and fruitful living, it is our humble suggestion to them to deal more with the everlasting principles of religion and philosophy, and not so much with the mere curious facts of occult and psychic phenomena. These though containing grains of truth, are not of permanent and vitalising influence in spiritual life, and are looked upon by our sages, when dabbled too much in, as weakening and as obstacles in the path of spiritual progress.

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*The Devalaya Review*. A new quarterly magazine started under the auspices of the Devalaya Association and devoted to the religious, social and educational progress of all communities and published from the Devalaya Office 210/3/2 Cornwallis Street. It is a small magazine of crown size, containing short readable articles on philosophical, religious, and social subjects. It is catholic in its tone. We wish it all success.

Swami Vivekananda Charit Part V. in Mahratti.  
Edited by Ramchandra Narayan Mandlik.—To be had of the Editor, Ramtirtha Karyalaya, Girgaon, Bombay. Price Re. 1-2.

Pamphlets on—

- J. N. Tata, a sketch of his life and career.
- Mahatma Gandhi—a sketch of his life and career.
- Sir Subramanya Iyer—a sketch of his life and career.
- Published by Messrs. G.A. Natesan & Co. Price 4 as.
- Mahammad Ali Jinnah, Ambassador of Unity, with a Foreword by the Rajah of Mahmudabad.
- Heroes of the Hour, with a proem by K. Vyasa Rao.
- Published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Madras.

NEWS AND NOTES.

THE birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated in the premises of Raghunath Mandir, Fatah Kadal, Srinagar, Kashmir, on the 2nd June 1918. The temple hall was tastefully decorated and photos and pictures of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, Sri Sri Sankaracharya were beautifully garlanded. The hall was filled with landlords, merchants, pleaders, teachers, clerks and students of several schools and of Sri Pratap College. The assembled devotees by their songs attended with music created an intensely devotional atmosphere on the occasion. In the end Pandit Haragopal Kaul, Secretary, Sanatan Dharma Sabha thanked H. H. The Maharaja Saheb of Kashmir under whose kind patronage the Dharma Sabha is working. There were rejoicings throughout the evening and with the distribution of Prasad the meeting came to a close with joyous shouts of "Guru Maharaj ki Jai." It is a pleasure to notice that people in remote Kashmir are waking up to and receiving the message and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and the organisers of the work are to be congratulated on their labours in the cause.

SWAMI Paramananda, of Vedanta Centre, Boston, U. S. A. visited Seattle in connection with Vedanta preaching work, where his work met with eminent success. He delivered public lectures which had overflowing attendance and held private classes and interviews. A great many people

were interested in the teachings of the Vedanta and there was an insistent demand for a permanent centre which the Swami did not feel it possible to consider for the present. Many hundreds of books and pamphlets on the Vedanta were also bought. The Swami also visited Tocoma and Portland where he delivered lectures and came to Los Angeles. At Los Angeles he gave many lectures and held classes in the Vedanta Centre there and also delivered a series of lectures at the New Thought Convention in Los Angeles, at the Buddhist Temple in Pasadena and at Santa Barbara. All these evidences of interest testify to a growing recognition of the value of the Vedanta teaching.

#### MAHASAMADHI.

As we were going to the press, the sad news reached us of the Mahasamadhi of His Holiness Swami Premanandaji Maharaj, on the afternoon of the 30th July, 1918, at 57 Ramkanto Bose's Street, Calcutta. Dearly beloved of his Master Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, he was one of his nearest disciples and held high in the estimation of his Master. (He gave himself so unreservedly and with such complete self-abandonment to the cause of his Master and his brother, the Swami Vivekananda, to whose memory he was so unflinchingly loyal, that his evangelical labours for the uplift of suffering humanity which he prosecuted with passionate zeal and enthusiasm in East Bengal and elsewhere, told on his health and his body was attacked with a fell-disease, the *kala-a-zar*. Suffering from this cruel disease for a period of nearly 14 months he had an attack of Pneumonia, which proved fatal; he renounced his body and his soul soared high on the wings of meditation. Those of us to whom it has been the privilege to have known and loved him feel that in him a Great Soul came down to us and lived and trod this world of death and change for a time in order to show us "the way, the truth and the life"; and after

a whole life of continuous love and blessings and spiritual enlightenment, when his work is finished, he has entered for ever the realms of bliss and immortality. His body was taken to the Belur Math and cremated there on the banks of the Ganges.

#### SISTER NIVEDITA GIRLS' SCHOOL FUND.

We beg to acknowledge with hearty thanks the following donations to the above Fund :—

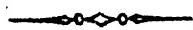
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Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by

Swami Saradananda,

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1. Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.



# ग्रन्थालय भारत



प्राप्य वराश्रिष्टोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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SEPTEMBER 1918

[ No. 266

## CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

XVII.

[Place—Belur, monastery in a rented house. Year—1898.

Subjects A Sanskrit composition by Swamiji—infusion of new life in thought and language on Sri Ramakrishna's advent.—How to infuse vitality in language.—Fear to be abjured.—All weakness and sin proceed from fear—to be even-balanced in all conditions.—The benefit of the study of Scriptures.—Swamiji's study of the eight chapters of Panini.—On the dawn of knowledge nothing is considered as mysterious.]

The Math is still situated in Nilambar Babu's garden-house at Belur. Now it is towards the end of the Bengali month of *agrahayanam*. Swamiji is now much engaged in the study and discussion of Sanskrit Scriptures. The couplets beginning with "achandala-pratihataraya," he composed about this time. To-day Swamiji composed the stanzas "*Om hrim ritam*" and making it over to disciple said, "See if there is any fault of metre in these stanzas." The disciple signifying assent took a copy of the poem.

On the day Swamiji composed the invocatory hymn, it seemed as if the Goddess of learning has manifested Herself on his tongue. With the disciple he

talked for about two hours at a stretch fluently in melodious Sanskrit. Such a melodious manipulation of words the disciple has not heard from the lips even of great Pundits.

However, on the disciple's copying the hymn, Swamiji said "You see, as I write while immersed in thought, grammatical slips sometimes occur; therefore I ask you to look it up."

Disciple.— Sir, those are not slips, but the licence of genius.

Swamiji.— You say that; but why will other people assent to that? The other day I wrote an essay on "what is Hinduism"; some of you are already complaining that it is written in very stiff Bengali.

I think like all things language and thought become lifeless and monotonous in course of time. I think it has happened so in this country. On the advent of Sri Ramakrishna a new current has set in thought and language. Everything has now to be recast in new moulds. Everything has to be propagated with the stamp of new genius. Look for example how the old modes of Sannyasins are breaking and forming into a new mould which is gradually taking shape. Society is protesting much against it—but is it of any avail? Neither are we receiving any fright. The Sannyasins of the present day have to go to distant countries for preaching—if they go in ash-besmeared half-nude body dressed like the Sadhus of old, in the first place, they won't be taken on board ships; and even if they anyhow reach foreign countries in that dress they will have to stay in jail. Everything requires to be changed a little according to place, time and civilisation. Henceforth I am thinking of writing essays in Bengali. Litterateurs will perhaps rail at that. Never mind—I shall try to cast the Bengali language in a new mould. Now-a-days, Bengali writers use too much verbs in their writings; this takes away from the force of the language. If one can express the ideas of verbs with adjectives, it adds to the force of the language,—henceforth try to write in that style. Try to write essays in that style in the “Udbodhan.” Do you know the meaning of the use of verbs in language? It gives a pause to the thought; therefore the use of very many verbs in language is a sign of weakness like quick breathing, and indicates that there is not much vitality in the language; that is why one cannot lecture well in the Bengali language. He who has control over his language, does

not create an abrupt break in his thoughts. As your physical bodies have been rendered languid by living on a dietary of soft boiled rice and *dāl*, similarly is the case with your language. In food, in your movements, in thought and language, energy has to be infused. With the infusion of vitality all round, the circulation of strong blood in all the veins, one should feel the throbbing of new life in everything—then only will the people be able to survive the terrible struggle for existence; otherwise the country and the race will vanish in the enveloping shadows of death.

Disciple.— Sir, the constitution of the people of this country has been moulded in a certain way through long years. Is it possible to change that within a short time?

Swamiji.— If you have known the old ways to be wrong, then why do not you, as I say, learn to live in a better way? By your example ten other people will follow suit, and by their's another 50 people will learn—and by this process in course of time the new idea will awaken in the hearts of the whole race. But even if after understanding, you do not act accordingly, I shall know that you are wise in words only—but practically you are fools.

Disciple.— By your words, Sir, one feels the accession of great courage and becomes full of enthusiasm, energy and strength.

Swamiji.— By and by, the heart has to be strengthened. If one man is made, it equals the result of a thousand lectures. Making the mind and the mouth one, the ideas have to be practicalised in life. This is what Sri Ramakrishna meant by “no theft in the chamber of thought.” You have to be practical all round (i. e. manifest your professions and ideas in tangible work). The whole country has

been ruined by masses of theories. He who is the true son of Sri Ramakrishna, he will manifest the practical side of religious ideas and will set to work with one-pointed devotion without paying heed to the prattling of men and of the world. Haven't you heard of the couplet of Tulsidas: "The elephant walks the market-place and a thousand curs bark after him, the Sadhus have no ill-feeling if worldly people slander them."

You have to walk in this way. No count to be laid upon the words of people. If one has to pay heed to their praise or blame, no great work can be accomplished in this life, "The Atman is not to be gained by the weak." If there is no strength in body and mind, the Atman cannot be realised. First you have to build the body by good nutritious food—then only will the mind be strong. The mind is but the subtle part of the body. You must retain great strength in your mind and words. "I am low," "I am low," repeating these ideas in the mind man belittles and degrades himself—therefore the Shastras say, "He who thinks himself free, free he becomes; he who thinks himself bound, bound he remains—this popular saying is true, as one thinks, such a destiny he realises." He who is always awake to the idea of freedom he becomes free; he who thinks I am bound, know that life after life he endures in the state of bondage. This truth holds good both in spiritual and temporal matters. In this life those who are down-hearted and dispirited, no work is done by them; from life to life they come and go wailing and moaning. "The earth is enjoyed by heroes"—heroic souls only enjoy the earth—this is the unfailing truth. Be a hero, always say—"I have no fear." Tell this to every body "Have no fear"—fear is

death—fear is sin—fear is hell—fear unrighteousness—fear is wrong life; whatever there is of negative thoughts and ideas in this world, know all to have proceeded from this Evil Spirit of Fear. This fear constitutes the sun-ness of Sun, the air-ness of Air, the death-ness of Death, which has kept everything in its own place, imprisoned in its narrow circle, allowing none to escape from its bounds. Therefore the Sruti says "Through fear of this, the fire burns, the sun heats, through fear Indra and Vayu are carrying on their functions, and Death stalks this Earth." When the gods Indra, Chandra, Vayu, Varun will attain to fearlessness, then will they be one with the Brahman, and all the phantasm of the world vanishes. Therefore I say, "Be fearless," "Be fearless."

Swamiji in saying these words, the corners of his expanded lotus-eyes appeared flushed with emotion with the crimson hue of the early morning sun, and he appeared to the eyes of the disciple like the very embodiment of "fearlessness" sitting in flesh and blood before him; looking at that figure of fearlessness, the disciple began to think within himself, "how wonderful, sitting by this Great Soul and listening to his profound and powerful talk even the fear of death leaves one and vanishes into nothingness."

Swamiji again began to say, "In this embodied existence, you will be tossed on the waves of much happiness and misery, prosperity and adversity—but know them all to be of temporary duration. Never think them to be consequential at all. "I am the birthless, the deathless Atman, whose nature is Intelligence"—implanting this idea firmly in your heart, you should pass the days of life. "I have no birth, no death, I am the Atman untouched by anything"—lose yourself completely in this idea. If

you can once be one with this idea, then in the hour of sorrow and tribulation, it will rise of itself in your mind, and you will not have to strive with difficulty to bring it up. The other day, I was a guest at the house of Priyanath Mukherjee at Baidyanath. There I had such a spell of hard breathing that I felt like dying. But from within with every breath arose the deep-toned sound, "I am He," "I am He." Resting on the pillow, I was waiting for the escape of the vital breath but observing—from within was being heard only the sound of "I am He," "I am He"—only hearing "The Brahman, the One without a second, alone exists nothing manifold here exists besides It." The disciple struck with amazement, said, "Sir, talking with you and listening to your realisations, I feel no necessity for the study of Scriptures."

Swamiji.— No! Scriptures have to be studied also. For the attainment of *jnana*, study of scriptures is essentially necessary. I shall open scripture-classes in the Math very soon. The Vedas, Upanishad, the Gita and Bhagbhat should be studied in the classes and I shall teach the Panini Ashtadhayayi.

Disciple.— Have you studied the Ashtadhayayi (of eight chapters) of Panini?

Swamiji.— When I was in Jeypore, I met a great grammarian and felt a great desire to study the Sanskrit grammar with him. Although he was a great scholar in Sanskrit grammar, he had not much aptitude and power of teaching. He explained to me the commentary on the first aphorism of grammar for three days continuously, still I could not grasp a little of it. On the fourth day the teacher got annoyed and said, "Swamiji, I could not make you understand the meaning of the first aphorism even after teaching you for three days; I

fear, you will not much benefit by my teaching." Hearing these words a great self-reproach came over me. Putting sleep and food aside—I set myself to study the commentary by my own independent efforts. Within three hours' study the sense of the commentary stood explained before me as clearly as an Amalaki fruit on the palm of one's hand; then going to my teacher I explained before him by word of mouth the sense of the whole commentary. My teacher hearing, said—"What I could not explain to you by three days exposition, how could you gather the sense so excellently within three hours." After that, every day I began to read from chapter to chapter, like the running waters of the flow-tide. By concentration of mind everything can be accomplished—even the mountains can be crumbled to fragments.

Disciple.— Sit, everything is wonderful with you.

Swamiji.— There is nothing wonderful in this universe. Ignorance constitutes the only darkness, which covers everything and makes them look mysterious. When everything is lighted by the light of Knowledge the sense of mystery vanishes from the face of things. Even such an inscrutable thing as the cosmic Maya which brings the most impossible things to pass, disappears. Knowing Whom, everything else is known, know Him, think of Him—and when that Atman is realised the purport of all scriptures will be perceived as clearly as a fruit on the palm of one's hand. The Rishis of old attained realisation and shall we fail? We are also men. What has happened once in the life of one individual, that must by endeavour be realised in the life of another. History repeats itself—what has happened once must happen again. This

Atman is the same in all, there is only difference of manifestation in different individuals. Try to manifest this Atman and you will see your intellect penetrating into all subjects. The intellect of one who has not realised the Atman is one-sided, whereas the genius of the knower of the Atman is all-devouring and versa-

tile. With the manifestation of the Atman you will find that everything, science, philosophy will be easily mastered. Proclaim the glory of the Atman with the deep-toned voice of a lion's roar, and imparting fearlessness unto all beings say—"Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached."

### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

**T**HE linking up of the whole world and the consequent growth of a consciousness of solidarity among groups of human beings has added some new problems to our age. The well-being of the individual is now bound up with the human group of which he is a part in a much more vital way than it has been before in any previous age and we naturally find a mutation of idea which has changed our perspective. In the West, this changed angle of vision has discredited a life of mere monkish seclusion and striving for personal salvation, which was the ideal of the Middle Ages in Europe and has put a premium on all endeavours which include the uplift and advancement of the group to which he belongs. At present this group is delimited by the concept of *nation* with its community of ties and interests, its common love and hate, and few have learnt at the present state of human evolution to make the concept of humanity, the central conception informing his activities.

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This mutation of moral sentiment which, by evolving the concept of nation has given us the human group to work, live and die for, has given birth to both good and bad results,—good in so far as it has

provided a motive-power for working for wider ends than that of personal gain or the welfare of the family, bad in so far as it has pent individuals within limited folds and has bred as much hatred for persons outside the fold as love for those within.

But the outstanding fact remains when we compare the social standards say of the thirteenth century in Europe, when refuge in a life of monkish retirement and work for the personal salvation was a laudable ideal, with the idols of the market-place in the twentieth century, that working for the social well-being, or helping a hand in the world's welfare, forms an essential element of all consecrated ideals. This attitude conceals a danger, viz. that it makes this world the end and aim of our exertions and confines human outlook within the horizon of this life; it is an evangel of Hope in that it furnishes an incentive to the broadening out of the individual and tuning his interests to a higher pitch.

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In consonance with this changed outlook we have been considering, we find also the birth of a new type of religious consciousness on the soil of India. It is not absolutely new, but the resuscitation

of the old applied to the wider needs of the present day. *Karma-yoga*, or the union to Truth by work is a method long consecrated in the Hindu scriptures as a special mode of realising the Truth, and counts among its adherents a long line of followers and exponents. But the principles guiding it, the outlook on which it is based, the *dronement* to which it tends, is different by far from the humanitarian idealism or work for the welfare of the world as understood in the West. It aims at the realisation not of a common nationhood, nay not even of a common humanity, or universal brotherhood but at the perception of universal self-hood, or immanent *Brahmaness* of all that exists. It is essentially a religious impulse because its adaptation is not to the temporal order of things, but to the larger horizon of the Spirit; not that the two conflict and are exclusive of each other, but the temporal is subordinated to the spiritual, the worldly embraced in the higher synthesis of the spiritual. Karma-yoga takes all the forms of worldly activities and duties, but chastened by its wider out-look they are turned to quite different issues; instead of piling ignorance and delusion on us, and keeping us confined to the wheel of birth and death, they are used as means to break our bondages and set ourselves free. All work is used as worship, every object looked upon as a symbol of Brahman, to realise the underlying oneness, which is the goal of knowledge.

"If I am the Brahman, then my soul is a temple of the Highest, and my every motion should be a worship." If the One and the Many are the same reality, every movement, every manifestation is a worship, every object is God. What is sacred

and what is profane? Nought else exists but He!—that is why man instinctively worships everything. But does this not lead to a confusion of what is ethically good and bad? No, the vision will change and bad will be automatically inhibited; the vision of purity will not beget unholiness, worship will not produce evil.

What is meant by work as worship, how will it transform us? If work is regarded as worship, then will it be perfect, it will rouse the best of our faculties and concentrate them on the work. There should be nothing slipshod, nothing perfunctory about it, for, for the time being, it is our highest ideal made manifest, our whole soul gone into it, nay we are one with it. It will be one continuous meditation, and anything which will indicate that our attention has flagged or our concentration wavered will constitute a desecration of the worship. As has been truly said: "As in meditation the whole mind is concentrated, so in work the whole man is concentrated and the concentrated force expresses itself not only through the mind but his very hands and feet and all the faculties of mind and heart."

Again if work is worship, or to express it in terms of phenomena, if every movement is a manifestation of the One Power or *Shakti* behind; there is no greatness or smallness in the diverse manifestations of the same *Shakti*. Every detail, every minutia would receive as much attention as any other, and everything would be steeped in the light of the spirit. We should turn from no work however humble, and every detail would receive infinite significance and meaning, by its connexion with the *Shakti* behind. True performance of work is the truest worship of

Shakti, of Mother. And as Mother manifests herself equally in Her Blissful and Terrible aspects, it is in unpleasant, toughest work that She is specially lurking and there should we fling ourselves and embrace it with high-hearted enthusiasm. For only by embracing the most difficult and toughest work which by its rude shocks, pounds all the mortal elements of our being, rouses the depths of our being, we come face to face with our own Infinite Nature.

We dispose ourselves to continuous meditation and seek to turn away from work, as a hindrance, as a dead-weight which draws us down from the sphere of continuous and resplendent meditation on the Spirit, which the mind hankers after. But it is very often the surface of a shallow consciousness which refuses to be stirred out of inertia that so disposes itself, and in the name of meditation skims on the surface of a shallow concentration. But by work, by strenuous and arduous work, deeper levels of being and concentration will be brought out, and then it will be easy "to fill ourselves in the depths

of our being with the quietness of peace and spiritual meditation and yet to impell every member and pulsation of the body with the spirit of work." The less demand we make on our powers of concentration, the less exertion does it put forth, and we succeed in bringing out and manifesting but a small portion of the light of spirit. Salvation consists in stirring the depths of existence, rousing the whole man, manifesting the utmost of Intelligence, awareness and concentration and giving one the control over them. By the whole-hearted, arduous performance of whatever work falls to our lot, we worship the Great Power whose manifestations all modes of work embody; the Mother, the great repository of all power in the universe, becomes pleased, takes off our bondages and limitations, makes us one with the cosmic energy which She is, and which now flows abundantly through our lives. Tamas and Rajas stand controlled and we dwell on the serene heights of the Sattva, everything becoming filled with intelligence which emanates through every pore of the universe, and dead matter is triumphed over.

#### KANTISM AND VEDANTA.

**T**HIS system of Kant's philosophy shows the greatness and the limitation of systems based on the unaided strength of intellect only. It is wonderful as a dialectic, as a laying bare of the fundamental traits of our intellectual operations, of the limitations they work under, of the conditions imposed on our acquirement of knowledge. But it is not constructive and creative; it does not show us the source and ultimate spring of the facts of our intellectual and moral life. The "syn-

thesical unity of apperception," the cement which binds together the manifold concrete of our sense perceptions, Kant discovers in the consciousness, in the "I think."

The "I think" which accompanies all states of consciousness is not a statical unity but dynamic unity; for it is always associated with a particular state of consciousness and moves from one to another; we never know by the intellect of a generic unity of consciousness, of the base

of consciousness standing apart from its particular states and giving unity to all; it is as much beyond intellect, as the thing-in-itself is beyond the formal conditions of time and space. In consciousness we never discover the real underlying back-ground of unity, the unchangable and unqualified unity, which alone is the static unity imparting the unity to consciousness. Consciousness is far too moving a thing to form the real synthetical principle. It owes its synthesising power to a deeper level of its being, in a more unmodified and unchanging state of its existence. The enquiry into this is by the very conditions of Kantian philosophy, by the limitations of its *organon* put out of court. The final ground of unification of the elements of sense-perception, Kant discovers in consciousness, the utmost limit to which intellect can go. But he cannot push his enquiries beyond consciousness, as otherwise the intellect will collapse in a hopeless wreckage. Therefore Kant's analysis is true in so far as the unifying principle which presupposes all our knowledge is a spontaneous act of the Ego, and not derived from sensibility, but a heritage of human thought, it is prevented by the conditions of its *organon* from tracing this unity to its real source and habitation. It has scent of what in Vedanta is said to be the *Buddhi*, or the intelligence or will which connects all the elements of sense-perception in consciousness; and fashions concepts or propositions out of them, but it has no idea of the बुद्धे परतस्तु सः—of the One who is beyond Buddhi who gives to consciousness even the power of unifying the particulars by a synthetic act.

Again, of the facts of our moral life, Kant does not show the fountain-head from which our moral-consciousness flows, the light which lights his "categorical im-

perative." He no doubt ascribes primacy to moral conscience and freedom to the Will in the field of action and asks us to so comport ourselves in the world of action as if we are free, as if it were proved that we were moral. For the freedom of the Will or the primacy of the moral conscience, (i. e. the unconditioned command of the ideal will which claims unqualified and willing obedience from the natural will) cannot be brought within the domain of intellectual demonstration. It is true that the freedom to action, and the unconditioned "ought" of the categorical imperative cannot be accounted for by the facts of intellectual and phenomenal life where everything is bound by cause and effect, where our sensuous nature thwarts and misleads our moral will. What is the ground for believing that the phenomenal and sensuous universe is governed by the principles of moral law? Yet according to Kant the freedom of action, the sense of morality is a fundamental fact of our practical life. So he explains them as incursions into the field of consciousness from a supersensible, an intelligible, ideal world, whose nature cannot be apprehended by the human intellect, of which world also man is a citizen, where freedom and reason reigns. Therefore he asks us to assume this freedom and supremacy of moral laws and to act in the world as if we were free, as if we were endowed with primal moral consciousness. Again, from a mere moral consciousness, one cannot descend into the particular maxims of conduct, as it is a mere "a priori" judgment of a formal character, the sense of morality, which does not light the working out of the moral consciousness in the world of phenomena.

Here again, the human intellect on

which Kant relied alone as his *organon* of philosophical enquiry failed to give him a clear idea of the Uncaused, Free Substance, which when caught into the forms of thought gives our phenomenal world of determinism and from which source also flows the consciousness of the freedom of will and the supreme authority of the moral conscience over the natural will.

There is one part of the philosophy of Kant where he peers through the bars of intellect and catches glimpses of the world beyond; his intellect hints at the existence of, but cannot reach, the Infinite beyond the finite, the Universal beyond the individual the Total beyond the particular. The intellect explains and takes them for their worth but cannot reach them. These form the subject of enquiry of his Transcendental Dialectic. These give rise to the three 'Ideas,' the 'Ideas' of World, the Soul, the God. The reasoning by which he explains them is as follows: A material world which is the cause of sensation; a substance of which all mental acts are phases is impossible to get at, for then we have to step out of consciousness and rise above the conditions of our knowledge, viz- time and space and the forms of understanding. But *pure reasoning* always tries to push forward beyond a single synthesis or group of synthesis. It always tends to go beyond any generalisations, however far it may, and unsatisfied by the largest generalisation extends the generalisation of the intellect to the utmost, till it almost bursts the bounds of the intellect and arrives at the supreme generalisations of God, Soul and Cosmos. These are the only generalisation in Kant's system, these *Ideas* which are devoid of sense-content, which are devoid of sensibility, which are pure ideas, all other ideas have a

content of *matter* regulated by the forms of thought. The function of these ideas are only regulative, they do not exist as substance, for they cannot be known by intellect. The operations of sensibility and intellect point to them as the inevitable convergence of their lines of action, as their supreme norms and highest syntheses.

But no generalisation of ideas with sense-content will give rise to the Ideas, which are devoid of the content of sensibility, these ideas of the soul, absolute and God; for the intellect according to Kant works only on the matter of sensations, and no sense-instrument will produce supersensible ideas; here it must be a case of Mahomet going to the mountain and no nay. So in order to realise these supersensible ideas, we must leave behind the dowry of the intellect, its space and time and the forms of the understanding and discover another *organon* by which to come face to face with them. For as Kant says these realities cannot be brought within intellectual demonstration, for they are not within the competence of human intellect.

The great achievement of Kant's system is in thoroughly weighing the contents of the human intellect, in ascribing the true place to it in the play of human faculties, in prescribing the limits to its operations. So that we know exactly how far the intellect can go with us in our search of ultimate principles and we are warned not to expect impossibilities from it, and to make it perform feats which will only kill it in the attempt. That such questions as Freedom, Immortality, God, the Absolute, are impossible to solve by means of the intellect is true, but relying on intellect as the only weapon of philosophical enquiry, he left such great questions

outside the pale of human enquiry. But the intellectual world of Kant 'suspended in the mid-air' is surrounded by other worlds, "the ideal and intelligible," which furnishes the freedom to the practical will, and the supremacy of the moral consciousness. The Finite swims in the infinite, the individual in the universal, the caused and bound in the uncaused and free—although the latter are unknown,—this is the impression which the philosophy of Kant gives. These worlds are distrusted because they are not amenable to the human intellect. The Vedanta carries the philosophy of Kant further and appreciating the incompetence of the intellect, to explore the unknown, discovers another *organon*, which casting aside the limitations of intellect comes face to face

with the unknown. This is this introspective and the intuitive method of the Vedanta, the *dhárana*, *dhyana*, *samadhi*, the *samyama* of the Yoga-philosophers, by which space and time are thought away and transcended, the forms of understanding, the *vrittis* of *chitta*, are suppressed, and the unknown is made more than the known. It finds the unknown behind the mind and behind the senses as one and the same; and this when caught within the meshes of space, time and causation forms our world of intellect. The dialectic of Kantianism has to be supplemented by the *sádhana* of Vedanta, in order to give us a complete system of philosophy, both critical and constructive, scientific and spiritual at once.

### EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

( *Translated from Bengali.* )

CXL.

1895.

Dear—

\* \* \* I am quite in agreement with what S—is doing, but it is not necessary to preach that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was an Incarnation, and things of that sort. He came to do good to the world, not to trumpet his own name,—you must always remember this. Disciples pay their whole attention to the preservation of their master's name, and throw overboard his teachings and sectarianism etc. are its result. A—writes of C,—but I do not recollect him. Write all about him and convey him my thanks. Write in detail about all, I have no time to spare for idle gossip. \* \* Try to give up ceremonials. They are not meant for Sannyasins,

and one must work only so long as he does not attain to illumination. \* \* I have nothing to do with sectarianism, or party-forming and playing the frog-in-the-well, whatever else I may do. \* \* It is impossible to preach the catholic ideas of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and form sects at the same time. \* \* Only one kind of work I understand, and that is doing good to others, all else is doing evil. I therefore prostrate myself before the Lord Buddha. \* \* I am a Vedantist, Sachchidananda—Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute—is my God, I scarcely find any other God than the majestic form of my own Self. By the word 'Incarnations' are meant those who have attained that Brahmanhood, in other words, the Jivan-muktas—those who have realised this Freedom in this very life. I do not find any speciality in

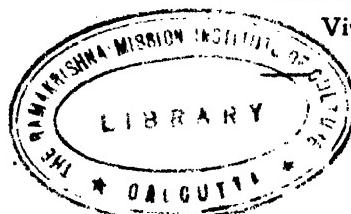
**Incarnations:** All beings from Brahman down to a clump of grass will attain to liberation-in-life in course of time, and our duty lies in helping all to reach that state. This help is called religion—the rest is irreligion. This help is work, the rest is evil-doing—I see nothing else. Other kinds of work, for example, the Vaidika or the Tantrika, may produce results—but resorting to them is simply waste of life—for that purity which is the goal of work is realisable only through doing good to others. Through works such as sacrifices etc., one may get enjoyments, but it is impossible to have the purity of soul. \* \* Everything exists already in the Self of all beings. He who asserts he is free, shall be free. He who says he is bound, bound he shall remain. To me, the thought of oneself as low and humble is a sin and ignorance. नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः—This Atman is not to be attained by one who is weak. अन्ति ब्रह्म वदसि चेदस्ति भविष्यति नान्ति ब्रह्म वदसि चेनास्त्येव भविष्यति—If you say Brahman is, existence will be the result, but if you say Brahman is not, non-existent It shall verily become. He who always thinks of himself as weak will never become strong, but he who knows himself to be a lion, “rushes out from the world's meshes, as a lion from its cage”—“निर्गच्छति जगज्ञालात् पिंजरादिवकेशरी”! Another point, it was no new truths that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa came to preach, though his advent brought the old truths to light. In other words, he was the embodiment of all the past religious thought of India. His life alone made me understand what the Shastras really meant, and the whole plan and scope of the old Shastras.

Missionaries and others could not do much against me in this country. Through the Lord's grace the people here like me greatly and are not to be tricked by the opinions of any particular class. They appreciate my ideas in a manner my own countrymen cannot do, and are not selfish. I mean, when

it comes to practical work, they would give up jealousy and all those ideas of self-sufficiency. Then all of them agree and act under the direction of a capable man. That is what makes them so great. But then they are a nation of Mammon-worshippers. Money comes before everything. People of our country are very liberal in pecuniary matters, but not so much these people. Every home has a miser. It is almost a religion here. But they fall into the clutches of the priests when they do something bad, and they buy their passage to heaven with money. These things are the same in every country, —priestcraft. I can say nothing as to whether I shall go back to India and when. There also I shall have to lead a wandering life as I do here, but here thousands of people listen to and understand my lectures, and these thousands are benefited. But can you say the same thing about India? \* \* I am perfectly at one with what S— is doing. A thousand thanks to him. \* \* In Madras and Bombay I have lots of men who are after my heart. They are learned and understand everything. Moreover, they are kind-hearted and can therefore appreciate the philanthropic spirit. \* \* I have printed neither books nor anything of the kind, I simply go on lecturing tours. \* \* When I take a retrospective view of my past life, I feel no remorse. From country to country I have travelled teaching something, however small, to people, and in exchange for that have partaken of their slices of bread. If I had found I had done no work, but simply supported myself by imposing upon people, I would have committed suicide to-day. Why do those who think themselves unfit to teach their fellow-beings, wear the teacher's garb and earn their bread by cheating them? Is not that a deadly sin? \* \*

Yours etc.

Vivekananda.



## CXLI.

54 W. 33 St. New York,  
9th February, 1895.

Dear—

\* \* Paramahansa Deva was my Guru, and whatever I may think of him in point of greatness, why should the world think after me? And if you press the point hard, you will spoil everything. The idea of worshipping the Guru as God is nowhere to be met with outside Bengal. Moreover other people are not ready to take up that ideal. \* \*

Henceforth address my letters as above, which is to be my permanent seat from now.

Try to send me an English translation of the Yogavasistha Ramayana. \* \*

Don't forget those books I asked for before, viz., Sanskrit Narada and Sandilya Sutras.

"आशाहि परमं दुःखं नैराश्यं परमं सुखम्"—Hope is the greatest of miseries, the highest bliss lies in giving up hope.

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda,

## SECOND VISIT TO THE LORD'S FARM.

(REMINISCENCES.)

THE next Saturday, Henry and I went to the Lord's Farm again. It was late in the afternoon when we arrived, and Mnason had just come back from the field. He was taking the harness off the horses.

"So you have come again," he said, seeing us, "that is right, I am putting up the horses, go inside and help Blaudine get the supper ready. I will be with you in a minute."

"Alright Mnason," one of us replied, "but remember, many cooks spoil the broth."

"Oh, no fear," he said, "there will be no broth, ye know that. But we will have fresh cherries for supper. I have just picked them. Go inside now and talk to Blaudine. She will be awfully glad to see you."

"Hallo! Blaudine, here we are again to sample your vegetarian supper. How are you?"

"Well, I declare, if it is not Henry and Cornelius. Now that is nice, sit down. And where is Marion?"

By this time John had also come into the room. "Oh," he said, "Marion, I suppose got frightened. This is not a place for city folk, you know. We are not polished enough for them. I used to laugh seeing these fine ladies and gentlemen walk in the street like peacocks. Cornelius and Henry

also like fine dress, you see? And they cannot forget their city manners."

"Now, John, thou must not be so hard on them," said Blaudine. "They will soon forget these things. Oh, here comes Titus. See Titus, they have come again."

"But Marion got frightened," John said laughing. Titus smiled. "Oh, well," he said, "many come and go, John thou art witness to that, but few stay with us. Henry and Cornelius will also soon go back. They can stand it just for about two days and then they have to run back to the city. What dost thou say, Mnason?"

Mnason had just joined us. "Well," he said, "we do not invite people. Who comes is welcome and can stay as long as he likes. But this is a hard life, few there are who can endure it. They think they like to stay here, but after a while they get tired. They want excitement, theaters, fine dinners and good clothing. Many are called but few are chosen. Marion, said to me that she would like to live here. But I knew better, so I told her, 'nay, that is not true. If thee wanted to live here, thee wouldst not go back to the city.'"

"But Mnason," I said, "is not your hospitality often abused? Do not people take advantage of it?"

"Oh, well," he replied, "we do not care for that. Of course, many tramps used to come and lazy fellows who wanted to eat much and do little. But now they seldom come. Once such a lazy man came. Ye know, we all begin our work early in the morning. But this man would stay in bed till breakfast time. Then he would come down, take breakfast with us and loaf about. So it went on for a few days. We did not say any thing. But one morning he was late even for breakfast. So I took his breakfast up to his room and said: 'Friend, here is thine breakfast. Stay in bed and I shall bring thee dinner and supper in time.' He kept silent, but after breakfast he disappeared and we never saw him again.

"We get all kind of people here. Some are good, but in time they go. They cannot give themselves entirely to God. They still have some worldly desires and they want to go back to the flesh pot. One man stayed with us for a long time. We all liked him. He did not do any work, he only sat around and read his Bible. But he was not happy. We did not say anything, for we knew that he was sincere. But seeing him so morose, one day, I said: 'Friend, wouldst thee not be happier doing a little work?' He said: 'The Lord told me not to do any work.' 'Amen,' I said, 'do as the Lord tells thee.' Then, one day, he said that he did not feel the Lord's presence. I told him, that is because thee putst all thy faith in that book. Thou hast read enough. Now throw away thine Bible and speak to God.

"He felt a little offended, but he loved us, so he stayed for a long time. Even now he comes at times and then goes away again. But he cannot give up his Bible. He has more faith in that book than in God."

"Oh, Mnason, you were going to tell us last time of how you first heard the Voice of God. We had not time then. Do tell us now."

"Yea, it is many years ago," he said, "but I remember it well. I was a young fellow, enjoying myself and caring little for religion. One evening I was walking in the street in New York city, when I passed by a church. The service was going on and through the open doors I saw a large gathering of people. But I was not in the habit of going to church and I certainly had no intention or desire to go that evening. But while I was

passing the church, I heard a voice saying: 'Go to church.' I looked around but did not see any one. I walked on and again I heard: 'Go to church.' I looked around but there was no one in sight. I thought, that is strange. I rubbed my ears and thought it was imagination. But again the Voice spoke and kept on saying: 'Go to church.' It did not stop. I became a little puzzled and annoyed and said: 'Oh, keep silent.' But the Voice kept repeating: 'Go to church.' Then I thought, this is strange indeed. 'Well,' I said, 'if you keep quiet now I will go to church to-morrow.' At once the Voice kept silent. The next day this came to my mind. Evening came, but I felt no inclination to go to church. However, I was in the habit of always keeping my promises, so I thought, whatever that Voice may have been, I promised to go to church, so let me go once. And I went. The next day the Voice told me again to go to church. I went. And so it went on for three or four days.

"By this time my friends had noticed that I was going to church and they began to tease me. Then one said, 'you go to church, but I bet you have not the courage to go to the front when the minister calls.' In that church the minister, after the sermon, used to invite those who wanted his help, to step to the front and he and his deacons would talk and pray with them. Well, I accepted the bet, as I did not like to be daunted by them. But when I went to the front of the church and knelt down I suddenly swooned away and I had a terrible vision of hell. I saw a pool of fire and I saw people, some my friends, being thrown into that pool. I became thoroughly frightened and the vision remained with me for days. Then I said: 'Lord, is it thine Voice that spoke to me and is that what sinners come to? Then speak to me again and I shall henceforth always obey Thee.' And from that time on, the Voice has never entirely left me. Sometimes it has been a very strict master, but I always obeyed, no matter how difficult it was.

"In the beginning I was sometimes ashamed to do the things it told me to do. I thought, 'what will people say?' But then I reasoned, 'Whom shall I serve the people or God? I cannot please both. Then let me please the Lord.' And now I have done away with shame. You see, I have lost

my reputation. People call me a fool. But it feels very free and easy not to have to think of one's reputation." And Mnason laughed. "But truly," he went on, "we cannot cling to name and fame and all these things and at the same time serve God. All that has to go. We must die to our likes and dislikes if we want to walk in the path of obedience. It is a life of war and rumors of war. But it is a grand life. I would not exchange it for all the wealth and power of the world. It is the sweetest life, to love God. It takes away all worry and anxiety. Cornelius, *it is the only life worth living, believe me.*"

"Yes, Mnason," I said, "I believe it. But it is so difficult." "Yes, my boy," he said, "it may be difficult but try a little now and then. Gradually it will become easy. I never found it very hard. I used to lose myself entirely in God. I would forget everything and spend whole days and nights with Him. I would constantly feel His presence. And now it is so easy for me. You see:

"I sought Him by night and I sought Him by day.  
I died in His love and all self passed away."  
and he sang:

Opened wide, opened wide,  
Are my arms, my Love, to Thee,  
Opened wide, outstretched forever,  
Rest in them my own fair Bride."

"When I began to go to church regularly, the minister and others began to notice me. They talked to me and asked me many questions. Then I thought: 'What is this? I want God, I do not want people. If God is true then I must speak to Him direct and He must answer me. I do not want to go to Him through people.' So I said: 'Lord, I have promised to obey Thee, if Thou wilt speak to me. I shall not go to these people any more. They only confound me. I want to learn from Thee, I want no other teacher but Thee.' Then I kept silent and listened for an answer. I did not hear anything, but I felt God's presence brooding over me and enfold me and I became so happy, that I began to dance with joy. 'Blessed Lord,' I said, 'I am Thine forever. Keep me always close to Thee.' And that he has done." And Mnason sang:

"Mine, mine, Thou art mine,  
My only one, my fair One  
I know Thou art mine!"

"But sometimes," he continued, "the evil one came after me. Then I was in a terrible condition. I felt as if a heavy weight was pressing all over my body. I could hardly breathe and I would feel so exhausted that I had to throw myself on my bed. There I would lie sometimes for hours and perspiration would come from every pore of my body. It would run down on the bed in such profusion that it would wet the floor. I had never seen or heard of such a thing before. Sometimes I saw terrible creatures who threatened to kill me. Once a gigantic horse-like creature came through the wall into my room. 'I will trample thee to death,' it said. 'Praise the Lord,' I shouted. And then the creature vanished as it had come.

"Once, in such a state, I felt as if some one was standing at the head of my bed. I looked up and saw two black men with red faces. One was pointing towards me and then said to the other: 'It is no use trying. We cannot touch him. He is iron clad.' I said: 'The Lord is my shield, be gone, ye devils.' Then they dissolved into a mist and disappeared. It was terrible. But after that I felt great peace.

"Another day I saw many little devils in my room. I said: 'Lord, what is this? Praised be thine name.' And as I spoke, the creatures vanished. Then I had beautiful visions of saints and angels. That was a great comfort to me. And sometimes I felt such power flow through me that I felt as if I could move mountains."

"Did you never speak to other people about your experiences, Mnason?" one of us asked.

"Yea," he said, "I did in the beginning. I had never heard or read of such visions in my life and I did not always know what to make of them. Then I would go to religious people and tell them what I had experienced. Some kept silent but looked suspicious. Others told me that it was my imagination. Others again warned me and said: 'These things are of the devil.' 'Yea,' I said, 'but how about the other visions of Jesus and the saints?' 'That is the devil in disguise,' they answered. I knew that was not true. I could find no help or sympathy anywhere. So I did not tell any one for a long time. I used to speak to the Lord and say: 'Father, I get confused speaking to these church people. Unless Thou speak to me, I do not know what to do.' Then the

Lord would console me and speak to me in such a sweet manner, that I thought: 'What a fool I have been to go to people first instead of going to the Father at once.'

"In later years I met a very good man and I told him some of my visions. He said: 'Mnason, I do not know much about these things, but I have read something in books about it. I shall give you a book where you will find something like that.' It was the Life of Madame Guyon. You see, I never read much. Only sometimes I would read the Bible, but not often. In Madame Guyon's Life I found experiences similar to my own. We all like the book. But I never was very good at reading.\*

Later in the day I asked whether they read the newspapers. "Nay," Mnason replied, "we do not read the papers. But many people come here and they like to talk of worldly things, so we hear a good deal of what is going on. Sometimes they bring us a paper with an article about us. The other day a man came here and he showed us such a paper. There was a long article about us and some pictures. In one picture some men and women (it was said to be at the Lord's Farm) were sitting around a table. On the table was flesh and wine and many things. One man was dancing on the table with a glass of wine in his hand. It was so funny, we had to laugh."

"But, Mnason, how can they write such lies about you? You do not even use tea or coffee, what to speak of wine!"

"Oh well," he said, "sometimes a reporter has nothing to write; then he comes here and going back he invents a story that he thinks the public will like. We are their last resource. The poor fellows have to make a living. And we do not mind."

"Mnason, what kind of things did the Voice tell you to do?"

\* Had Mnason been acquainted with the writings of Western saints, he would have known that his visions and realisations, though rare, were not quite unique, even in the West. See Evelyn Underhill's excellent work on Mysticism. It should also be remembered that there is much more religious toleration and understanding in the West now than there was in the days of which Mnason was speaking.

"Oh, it made me do so many things. Once I had to fast for a long time. I was not allowed to take any food. On the eighth day, when I was walking in the street, I passed by a house where a man was trying to lift a very heavy load. He could not manage it. The Lord said: 'Mnason, take that load and carry it for him.' I went to the man and said: 'Let me take it.' 'No,' he said, 'give me a lift, it is too heavy for one man.' I said: 'Nay, I will take it.' And I took it and carried it up a flight of stairs, where he wanted it. He said: 'You certainly are a strong man.' I replied: 'The Lord is my strength.' Then I went on my way. But I was surprised how I could carry such a heavy load after eight days fasting. After that I was allowed to take food."

"How did it feel to fast so long?"

"The first few days I was very hungry. But after that I did not feel hungry any more. I lost the desire for food. When I was allowed to take food again, I took it with some repugnance. But I felt alright after it.

"Sometimes I worked and got some money. At other times, the Voice told me not to do any work. Then my money would be spent and I had no place where to go. In the daytime I would go to some Park and during the cold nights I would walk to keep warm.

"Once, when I was not allowed to work, I sat in a Park. I had two dollars in my pocket. That was all I had. On a bench opposite me, sat a poor woman with a baby. The baby had hardly any clothing on and it was cold. Then the Voice said: 'Go to that woman and buy clothing for the child.' I went to the woman and asked her to come with me to buy clothing for the baby. She followed me and I bought a little frock and socks for the baby. The price was just two dollars. I had nothing left to buy food with or to pay for night lodging. So when evening came I began to walk to get warm. While I was walking in the street, a stranger called me. 'Take this,' he said. I took it. It was a dollar bill. I bought food and paid for shelter in a cheap hotel."

"Now, friends," Mnason said, "it is getting late. Go to bed. Take the same room ye had before. There is no washstand, but ye know where the pump is. And Blaudine will give ye towels. Not like city-life, is it?" And we all laughed.

The next day we helped a little in the sorting of fruit. Henry had a talk with Titus. "Don't you observe the Sunday?" he asked. "Well, we have to observe it to some extent," Titus replied. "The law of the State forbids all but the necessary work. We cannot work in the field on Sundays. Then we would be arrested. But we usually do some indoor work."

"Do you have no meetings or classes?"

"No, the Lord is with us always and we do not follow any set rules or rites. John sometimes goes out preaching on Sundays. But there is nothing of the kind here. We try to commune with God always, even during our heaviest work."

"Do you not meditate regularly?"

"You see, our life is a constant state of communion, so we do not set apart any special hour to meet God. We talk to Him and He talks to us as we go along. But when the Spirit moves us, we keep quiet."

"How do you divide the work?"

"The work divides itself. We all know what has to be done and we do it. There is no bossing here. We usually tell each other what we are going to do. And gradually each one has found his own work. Mnason does most of the marketing, I look after the fruit trees, John bakes and helps Blaudine. And we always help each other without being asked. When strangers come we never ask them to do any work. But most always they are glad to put their hands to something. We like to work and it is never a burden to us-- Nay, Cornelius, not there' (I had used a small tool and put it in the wrong place). We have a place for everything and we keep everything in its place. That saves much time and confusion where many live together."

"Do you get good prices for your fruit?"

"Yes, we usually get the highest market prices. Our fruit is first class, most of it and people know that we do not cheat them. So they usually pay what we ask. It is almost a custom to top off the baskets with the best fruit. But our baskets run the same all the way through. So who buys from us once, likes to buy from us again."

"Then you can always sell what you take to the market?"

"Almost always. But if a few baskets are left, we take them to the poor quarters and sell them

for a low price. And we have many poor friends."

"Did you call this place the Lord's Farm, from the beginning?"

"Nay. One night, during sleep, John saw a beautiful angel, with light wings, come up to the door. It wrote something and then flew away. And when John looked he saw the words, 'The Lord's Farm.' Then John woke up and the next morning he told us about it and then we called the place the Lord's Farm."

Mnason had come in and the conversation drifted on to marriage. "What do you think about marriage, Mnason?" "That is of the flesh," he replied. "We are wedded to Christ, the Spirit, which is the Bride. Marriage is not for those who walk according to the Spirit. Titus once thought of marrying but after he met me he gave up the idea. And now he would not marry for anything. Purity is very necessary. A carnal man can not know the Spirit."

"What do you think about cremation?"

"What does it matter what they do with the body when the Spirit is gone? It is a dead mass and the sooner it is disposed of the better. As for myself, they may throw this body wherever they like. There is too much of body-worship. When the spirit leaves, it becomes a stinking mass. But people keep it in their homes and put flowers over it. They seem to think that somehow or other the spirit goes with it in the grave."

"Do you love flowers, Mnason?"

"Yes, I love flowers, therefore I leave them alone. The Lord has given them their own lives and I do not like to disturb them. What right have we to pick flowers for our selfish ends, to satisfy the senses? It is strange, people say they love flowers and then they cut short their lives by picking them."

And so the talk went on. Then we all went in the house for dinner. But before we sat down, I asked Blaudine a question. She answered it as she went about her work. "Blaudine," I asked, "does the Voice direct you in ordinary affairs too, or only in spiritual matters? Suppose you have to make an important decision, and you do not know what to do, do you get definite directions?"

"Most always I get a definite answer," she replied, "but sometimes it seems that the Lord wants me to decide for myself. In that case, if

the way is not clear, I choose the most difficult path, the path that would least appeal to my natural inclinations. For then I know that I do not act to please myself. Our desires are so treacherous, they sometimes deceive us. So by taking the path least pleasing to myself, I feel that even should I make a mistake, the Lord will not be offended with me. We must kill the old creature in us and never feed it by pleasing it. When the old man is gone, then the Lord comes. The two can not live in one body. The old man must die. We can not serve God and the flesh. Our conscience has become so very tender now, that we can not deviate from the path of righteousness even a little bit, without painful consequences. The Lord wants to possess us altogether, not part of us only. And we gladly give ourselves to Him and He gives himself to us. And that keeps us very happy."

After dinner I hazarded a serious question. It was directed to Mnason. "Mnason," I said, "how do you know that the Voice you speak of is really the Voice of God?" I had spoken rather glibly, but I had stepped on sacred ground. A grave look came over Mnason's face and for some time he remained silent. Usually his answers came with lightning quickness. This time, he looked at me intently. Then he spoke, slowly and deliberately: "Cornelius," he said, "thee hast asked of hidden things. Hast thee a doubt?" He paused a moment. Then,—"Who shall hear these things and believe them? In this temple (pointing to his body) the Word dwells. Here dwells the Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father." Then he was silent and he seemed very thoughtful.

Afterwards the talk took a lighter turn and there was some singing. And then our week-end was drawing to an end again and we had to think of going back to New York and the busy life that awaited us there. But I was loath to leave these good people. In parting I said: "Friends, I shall come again and I hope the day is not far off when I shall join you."

There came a look of wonderful tenderness in Mnason's face. "Cornelius," he said, "I cannot ask thee to join us, for thou hast much to renounce and this is no easy life. But thou knowest that the gate is always open for thee and what is ours is thine. And my strong arm will always support thee."

We hastened away, but the spirit of the place abided with us. And it grew stronger as the days went on. And later, the day came that, for some time, I also could be counted among the members of the Lord's Farm.

I loved the people for they were cheerful, fearless, generous and loving. I admired their purity and true spirit of renunciation. And I looked upon them as children of God,—in the world but not of it.

I would mention that before I joined the farm, I had visited there many times. And it is very possible that I have crowded into these two articles more than what was actually discussed during these two visits. Part of it may have occurred during subsequent visits. My object is not to be accurate about the order of events but to give, in as small a space as possible, a general picture of the people, as I remember them.

GURUDASA.

### VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from page 190.)

अथ ते संप्रवश्यामि स्वरूपं परमात्मनः ।  
यद्विज्ञाय नरो बन्धानमुक्तः कैवल्यमशनुते ॥१२४॥

124. Now I am going to tell thee of the real nature of the Paramatman, realising which man is freed from bondage and attains liberation.

[Liberation: 'Kaivalya' literally means extreme aloofness.]

अस्ति कश्चित्स्वयं नित्यमहंप्रत्ययलम्बनः ।  
अवस्थात्रयसाक्षी सन्पञ्चकोशविलक्षणः ॥१२५॥

125. There is some Absolute Entity, the eternal substratum of the perception of Egoism, the witness of three states, and distinct from the five sheaths or coverings.

[*Five sheaths &c.*—Consisting respectively of Anna (matter), Prâna (force), Mana (mind), Vijnâna (knowledge) and Ananda (Bliss). The first two comprise this body of ours, the third and fourth make up the subtle body (Sukshma Sarira) and the last the causal body (Kârana Sarira). The Atman referred to in this Sloka is beyond them all. These Kosas will be dealt with later on in the book.]

**योविजानाति सकलं जाग्रत्स्वग्रसुषुमिषु ।  
बुद्धितदृष्टिसद्वावभावमहमित्ययम् ॥१२६॥**

126. Who knows everything that happens in the waking state, in dream and in profound sleep, is aware of the presence or absence of the mind and its functions, and is the background of the notion, 'Here I am.'

[This Sloka gives the purport of such Sruti passages as Kena Up. I, 6, and Bri. III. iv. 2.]

**यः पश्यति स्वयं सर्वे यन्न पश्यति कश्चन ।  
यश्चेत्यति बुद्धादि न तद्यं चेतयत्ययम् ॥१२७॥**

127. Who Himself sees all, whom no one beholds, who illumines the Buddhi etc., but whom they cannot illumine.—This is He.

**येन विश्वमिदं व्याप्तं यन्न व्याप्तोति किञ्चन ।  
आभारूपमिदं सर्वं यं भान्तमनुभात्ययम् ॥१२८॥**

128. By whom this universe is pervaded, whom nothing pervades, who shining all this (universe) shines as His reflection.—This is He.

[*By whom etc.*—Compare Chhândogya III. xi. 6, and Gita x. 42.]

*Who shining etc.*—A reproduction of the sense of the celebrated verse occurring in Katha Upa. II. V. 15. Mundaka II. ii. 10, and Swetaswatra vi. 14.]

**थस्य सञ्चिदिमात्रेण देहेन्द्रियमनोधियः ।  
विषयेषु स्वकीयंषु वर्तन्ते प्रेरिताइव ॥१२९॥**

129. By whose very presence the body, the organs, mind and intellect keep to their respective spheres of action, like servants!

**अहङ्कारादिदेहान्ताविषयाश्च सुखादयः ।**

**वेद्यन्ते ब्रह्मवद् येन नित्यबोधस्वरूपिणा ॥१३०॥**

130. By whom everything from Egoism down to the body, the sense-objects and pleasure etc. is known as palpably as a jar,—for He is the essence of Eternal Knowledge !

[ Compare Bri. IV. iii. 23.]

**एषोऽन्तरात्मा पुरुषः पुराणो-**

**निरन्तराखण्डसुखानुभूतिः ।**

**सदैकरूपः प्रतिवोधमात्रं-**

**येनेपिता वागसवश्चरन्ति ॥१३१॥**

131. This is the innermost Self, the primeval Purusha (Being), whose essence is the constant realisation of infinite Bliss, who is ever the same, yet reflecting through the different mental modifications, and commanded by whom the organs and Praanas perform their functions.

[*Innermost Self.*—Vide Bri. III. 4 and elsewhere.]

*Reflecting etc.*—Compare Kena II. 12.

*Commanded by whom etc.*—See the opening Sloka of the same Upanishad and the reply given to it later on.]

**अत्रैव सत्त्वात्मनि धीगुहाया-**

**मव्याकृताकाशात्प्रकाशः ।**

**आकाशाद्वैरविवत्प्रकाशते**

**स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं प्रकाशयन् ॥१३२॥**

132. In this very body, in the mind full of Sattva, in the secret chamber of the intellect, in the Ákâsa known as the Unmanifested, the Atman, of charming splendour, shines like the sun aloft, manifesting this universe through its own effulgence.

[This Sloka gives the hint where to look in for the Atman. First of all there is the gross body; within this there is the mind or "inner organ," of which Buddhi or intelligence, characterised by determination, is the most developed form; within Buddhi again, pervading it, is the causal

body known as the Unmanifested. We must seek the Atman inside this. The idea is that Atman transcends all the three bodies—in fact the whole sphere of duality and materiality. The word 'Akasa' often occurs in the Sruti in the sense of Atman or Brahman. The Vedanta Sutras (I. i. 22) discuss this question and decide in favour of this meaning.

**शाता मनोऽहंकृतिविकियागां**

**देहेन्द्रियप्राणाकृतकियाणाम् ।**

**अयोग्निवत्ताननुवर्तमानो-**

**न चेष्टते नो विकरोति किञ्चन ॥१३३॥**

133. —The knower of the modifications of mind and egoism, and of the activities of the body, the organs, and Pranas, apparently taking their forms, like the fire in a ball of iron; it neither acts nor is subject to change in the least.

[ *Like the fire.....iron-* Just as fire has no form of its own, but seems to take on the form of the iron ball which it turns red-hot, so the Atman though without form seems to appear as Buddhi and so forth.

Compare Katha II. ii. 9. ]

**न जायते नो विन्द्रियते न वद्धेते**

**न लीयते नो विकरोति नित्यः ।**

**विलीयमार्नापि वपुष्यमुप्यि-**

**श्वलीयते कुम्भमध्याम्बरः स्वयम् ॥१३४॥**

134. It is neither born nor dies, it neither grows nor decays, nor does it undergo any change, being eternal. It does not cease to exist even when this body is destroyed, like the sky in a jar (after it is broken), for it is independent.

[ This Sloka refers to the six states enumerated by Yaska, which overtake every being, such as birth, existence etc. The Atman is above all change. ]

**प्रकृतिविकृतिभिन्नः शुद्धबोगस्वभावः**

**सदसदिदमर्थेषं भासयन्निर्विशेषः ।**

**विखसति परमात्मा जाग्रदादिष्ववस्था-**

**स्वहमहमिति साक्षात्साक्षिरुपेण बुद्धेः ॥१३५॥**

135. The Supreme Self, different from the Prakriti and its modifications, of the essence of Pure Knowledge, and Absolute, directly manifests this entire gross and subtle universe, in the waking and other states, as the substratum of the persistent sense of egoism and manifests Himself as the Witness of Buddhi, the determinative faculty.

[ *Prakriti*—the Mother of the entire manifested universe.

*Gross and subtle universe*—the world of matter and thought.

*The Witness of Buddhi*—all actions that we seem to be doing are really done by Buddhi, while the Self ever stands aloof, the only Absolute Entity. ]

**नियमितमनसामुङ्गं त्वं स्वमात्मानमात्म-**

**न्ययमहमिति साक्षाद्विद्धि बुद्धिप्रसादात् ।**

**जनिमरणतरंगापारसंसारासन्धुं**

**प्रतरभव कृतार्थं ब्रह्मरुपेण संखः ॥१३६॥**

136. By means of a regulated mind and the purified intellect (Buddhi) realise thou directly, thy own Self, in the body, so as to identify thyself with Him, cross the boundless ocean of Samsara whose waves are birth and death, and firmly established in Brahman as thy own essence be blessed.

[ *Identity.....Him*—instead of with the gross, subtle and causal bodies.

*Established.....nature.*—By our very nature we are ever identified with Brahman, but through ignorance we think we are limited and so forth. ]

**अत्रानात्मन्यहमिति भर्तिवन्ध एषोऽस्य पुंसः**

**प्राप्नोऽज्ञानाज्ञनमरणक्लेशसंपातहेतुः ।**

**यन्तेवायं वपुर्हिदमसत्सत्यमित्यात्मवुद्ध्या**

**पुष्यत्युक्त्यवति विपर्यस्तन्तुभिः कोशकृद्धत् ॥१३७॥**

137. Identifying the Self with this Non-self—this is the bondage of man, which is due to his ignorance, and brings in it, train the miseries of birth and death. It

is through this that one considers this evanescent body as real, and identifying oneself with it, nourishes, bathes, and preserves it by means of (agreeable) sense-objects, by which latter he becomes bound as the caterpillar by the threads of his cocoon.

[ *Bathes*—keeps it clean and tidy.

*Sense-objects etc.*—He runs after sense-pleasures thinking that will conduce to the well-being of the body, but these in turn throw him into a terrible bondage, and he has to abjure them wholly to attain his freedom, as the caterpillar has to cut through his cocoon.]

**अतस्मिस्तद्वुच्छिः प्रभवति विमूढस्य तमसा  
विद्येकाभावाद्वै स्फुरति भुजगे रज्जुधिषणा।  
ततोऽनर्थश्रातो निपतति समादातुरधिक-  
स्ततो योऽसदग्राहः स हि भवति बन्धःशृणु  
सखे ॥१३८॥**

138. One who is overpowered by ignorance mistakes a thing for what it is not: It is the absence of discrimination that causes one to mistake a snake for a rope and great dangers overtake him when he seizes it through that wrong notion. Hence, listen, my friend, it is the mistaking of transitory things as real that constitutes bondage.

[ *Discrimination*—between what is real (viz. the Self) and what is not real (viz. the phenomenal world.) ]

**अखण्डनित्याद्यवोधयक्त्या  
स्फुरन्तमात्मानमनन्तवैभवम्।  
समावृणोत्पाद्विशक्तिरेण  
तमोमयी राहुरिचार्कविम्बम् ॥१३९॥**

139. This veiling power (*Avritti*), which preponderates in ignorance, covers the Self, whose glories are infinite and who manifests Himself through the power of knowledge, indivisible, eternal, and one without a second,—as Râhu does the orb of the sun.

[ *As Râhu &c.*—The reference is to the solar eclipse. In Indian mythology the sun is supposed to be periodically overpowered by a demon named Râhu.]

**तिरोभूते स्वात्मन्यमलतरतेजोवति पुमा-  
ननात्मानं मोहादहमिति शरीरं कलयति ।  
ततः कामकोषधप्रभृतिभिरमुं बन्धनगुणैः  
परं विक्षेपाख्या रजस उरुशक्तिवर्यथर्यति ॥१४०॥**

140. When one's own Self, endowed with the purest splendour, is hidden from view, a man through ignorance falsely identifies himself with this body, which is non-self. And then the great power of Rajas called *Vikshepa*, the projecting power sorely afflicts him through the binding fetters of lust, anger etc.

[ *Projecting power*—See note on Sloka 111.]

**महामोहग्राहग्रसनगलितात्मावगमनो  
धियो नानावस्थां स्वयमभिनयंस्तदगुणातया ।  
अपारे संसारे विषयविषपूरे जलनिधौ  
निमज्ज्योन्मज्ज्यायं भ्रमति कुमतिः कुत्सित-  
गतिः ॥१४१॥**

141. The man of perverted intellect, having his self-knowledge swallowed up by the shark of utter ignorance, himself imitates the various states of the Intellect (Buddhi) as that is its superimposed attitude—and drifts up and down in this boundless ocean of Samsâra full of the poison of sense-enjoyment, now sinking, now rising,—a miserable fate indeed!

[  *Himself imitates &c.*—The Self is the real nature of every being, but a mistaken identification with the Buddhi causes him to appear as if he were active. See note on Sloka 135.

*Samsâra*—the entire relative existence.

*Up and down: sinking and rising.*—Acquiring different bodies such as the angelic or the animal, according to the good and bad deeds performed, and enjoying or suffering therein.]

(To be continued.)

### SWAMI PREMANANDA: IN MEMORIAM.

**G**REAT are the laurels which wreath the memory of mighty men of action, glorious the crown of glory which mitres the head of great politicians and reformers who bring about wonderful changes in the material order of our world; but glory of a kind different by far radiates from the "children of Spirit," "the offspring of Light," who born of Divine consciousness live their days in the light spiritual, and when their work is finished are embraced again in the lap of the Divine which they bodied forth. Their lives may not exhibit much stirring external activity, there is not much of the spectacular about them and men of the world pass them by. But if a Fate once brings one within the circle of their influence, the fascination, the indefinable magic of their loving, pure, Personality, suggestive of things one had never dreamt before, grows on one and he feels the wonderful transformation. As rays of light from their personality play upon our lives, we feel the slow mutation, the animal man is shed and the divine takes its place, and life which previously had no meaning becomes instinct with high purpose and significance; they are really the Fathers of humanity who give us birth in a new world; they are the slow "transmuters of the earthly into the Divine;" the animal man into the God-man.

The subject of our sketch, Swami Premananda was one of intense self-realisation and great spiritual power and love. He was born with such pure and Divine *Samskaras* that even as a boy, his boyish imagination used to picture before his mind's eye that if he could have a Sadhu as a companion and build a little hut in a secluded spot on the banks of the Ganges and there be a Sannyasin himself and live his days meditating and communing with God, it would be his *acme*

of happiness; and he was surprised when he awoke in his youth to find that a benevolent fate had brought him to the temple-garden of Dakshineswar with its grove of *Panchavati* and sitting in the midst of it, the paragon of Sannyasins, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. At their first meeting the Master recognised the innate spirituality of his nature, and examining him for a while said, "You are my own." The first meeting sealed their love and the subsequent unfoldment of the play of divine love between master and disciple thrills one in the reading; how he was tenderly sought after by the Master and the young devotee rendering at the feet of the Master all the passionate love, adoration and worship of his heart. At this fulfilment of the dream of his boyhood, all the noble impulses of his mind, his passionate love of God, purity and renunciation were inflamed, and ultimately he came to surrender himself completely at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna, who summed up in His personality, all that he could hope for, and aspire after in this life, his highest ideal made manifest. His spiritual life is closely related with that of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna like the penumbra and umbra of the same shadow and for the history of the spiritual unfoldment of that life we must turn to the life of the Master himself with which it is intimately interwoven.

Sri Ramakrishna held him very high in spiritual estimation. Of his disciples, whom he used to designate as "*Iswarkoti*," as born of the nature of God and come with a divine message as helpers in his *Lila*, he assigned a place to Baburam, as that was his previous name. He used to say of him, "Verily he is without a blemish, without a taint of impurity." And in some exalted super-conscious moods, when the Master would be

full of the spirit of God and his whole system flowing with the music of purity, so that he could not bear the approach of any person having the least touch of impurity, whose presence would grate on his nerves and give him agonies of pain; of the persons who could touch him then, and whose presence he could bear, he was one. He sat at the feet of the Master till his passing away listening to and realising in himself the wonderful words that fell from his lips.

After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna he with Swami Vivekananda and his brother-disciples took Sannyas, and since then sometimes at the *Math*, sometimes at Benares or Brindaban, he stayed absorbed in religious practices. When Swami Vivekananda returned to India from the West, and sent the late Swami Ramakrishnananda to take charge of the Mission Centre at Madras, since then he took charge of the worship of Sri Ramakrishna and passed most of his time at the Belur Math, and set himself to teaching, educating and moulding the religious lives of the Brahminacharins who gathered round him. He gave himself unstintedly in the service of all who came to the Math in the name of God. His love and care for the *bhaktas* (devotees) who came to the Math was phenomenal, and he would go to any length of sacrifice to be of the least service to them. At whatever hour of the day they would come to the Math, he would serve them with great love, sometimes even cooking food for them, feed them, listen to their tales of sorrow and joy, and speak to them words of wisdom and about the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. An all-consuming love which sought to prove itself in the love and service of all seemed to be the burning passion of his life. He was the life and soul of those movements of relief undertaken by the Ramakrishna Mission during the periods of devastating flood and famine which swept over Bengal in the Burdwan floods of 1913 and the famine of 1915. By

his burning words of encouragement, and exhortation, by his high enthusiasm in service, the workers were sent to render succour and aid in the distressed areas which drew forth such unstinted praise from the public and the government. Again when the call came from outlying parts of Bengal to spread the message and teachings of his Master, he responded to the call whole-heartedly and travelled over different districts of Eastern Bengal spreading the message of his Master. Wherever he went, by his love, his saintliness, the wonderful magic of his personality he won a mighty empire over the hearts of the people, both Hindus and Mahomedans, who were all attracted towards him and loved him as their own; and whenever he would leave a place, large crowds of people would follow him, weeping and shedding tears at his departure. The illiterate Mahomedan peasant of East Bengal, the slave of the love of this Hindu Sannyasin was a wonderful sight and did the heart good to see or reflect. Verily he was Premananda, bliss in love; he was Bliss; he was Love. "The love of the beloved Lord, and self-dedication to the work of the Beloved" was the only worship and ideal of this self-less Sannyasin.

Little could we express or give an idea of the vastness of the transcendental love which swayed him; it is so unlike anything we know in this world, it is so purifying and ennobling. Who knows what visions were vouchsafed to his pure eyes and hid from our more mortal gaze which constituted the motor-power of his all-devouring love? Was it the perception of what we read in the Scriptures : एवं सर्वेषु भूतेषु भक्तिरव्यभिचारणी । कर्तव्या पर्यग्नाते ज्ञात्वा सर्वभूतमयं हरिम् । "Knowing that Hari, the Lord is in every being, the wise have thus to manifest unswerving love towards all beings." Was it the perception of the Love which he had seen embodied in Dakshineswar, as manifested in the whole world in all beings and things which impelled him to such passionate and self-immolating, love and

service? Whatever the explanation, any one who had the privilege of knowing him has tasted the incomparable bliss of his heavenly love. He let us have a glimpse of the depths of his being when he wrote casually towards the end of his life to one: "I feel a desire now to love everybody—this is a disease which has now possessed me." Surpassing the monk, the *jnani*, the *tyagi*, in him it was his mother-like heart that was always awake and impressed everybody who came near him. He was as it were the Mother presiding over the monastery of Sri Ramakrishna. The transcendent love of God, the Author of our being, is incomprehensible to feeble human intellect; but the Sages say that It manifests Itself in the pure receptacle of some human beings; verily in our relationship with such men do we taste the heavenly bliss of Divine love and aspire to be united

to the Great Love which gave us being.

Swami Premananda ended the crowning sacrifice of his life, by the sacrifice of his body. In the labour of love of preaching the message of Sri Ramakrishna in parts of East Bengal, he threw to the winds all considerations of his bodily health and his comfort and convenience and prosecuted it relentless less of the consequences to his body. In visiting malaria-infested places, he was attacked with the fell disease of the *kala-azar*, from which he suffered long for over a year, to which at last his body succumbed on July 30th, 1918. It is a genuine holocaust of life's all, of mind and body, at the altar of God.

We stand with unutterable feelings of awe and reverence before his Samadhi and place on it reverently this garland of loving and grateful memory.

### AN APPEAL:

#### CLOTH-DISTRESS IN BENGAL.

OWING to the shortage of cloth in the Indian market due to the curtailment and almost stoppage of the import of cloth from England on account of the war, the prices of cloth have gone up tremendously; and if the war continues still longer the prices will go on increasing. The poorer classes in Bengal have felt the pinch greatly; already the increase in price of the other necessities of life due to war had been a tax on their small income; and with the prevailing high prices of cloth they are finding it difficult to make ends meet and are reduced to an extremity for want of cloth. Distress for want of cloth has taken an acute form with the poorer and middle classes of Bengal. On account of the shortage of cloth, many are clothing themselves with old clothes and cast-away garments and other temporary

improvisations. In some instances it has so happened that members of families, poor but respectable, have from sheer shame and desperation, unable to rescue themselves from this condition, ended their lives by suicide. Robbing people of cloth if found alone in the streets has also occurred. The condition of some poorer families have been reduced to such straits, that they have a limited number of good and decent clothes which the male members share among themselves while going out on business. The condition of the women in the poorer cases is still more pitiable; they dress in worn and tattered garments and remain inside always, for shame of meeting any man in that dress. Such news is reaching our ears and finding its way in the papers. The public is perhaps already aware of that.

The Ramakrishna mission has undertaken to relieve the miserable condition of the poorer classes of Bengal, depending on the charity and help of the generous public. To serve the poor and the distressed irrespective of caste and race has been the religion of the people of India. Will they now heed the cry of their poor countrymen and come forward to their help?

Already, through the kindness and generosity of Binjaraj Hukumchand, a Marwari gentlemen, 170 pairs of new cloths have been placed at the disposal of the Ramakrishna Mission, who have started distributing them over different parts of Bengal and opened centres of distribution at different places.

The Secretary of the Ramkrishna Mission therefore appeals to the kind and generous public to come promptly to the help of the poor in this time of dire distress. Any help, either in the shape of money, or of new and old clothes will be useful and accepted. Whatever help any one proffers will be thankfully received and acknowledged by—

(1) The Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission,  
No. 1 Mukherjee's Lane, Baghbazar,  
Calcutta.

(2) President, Ramkrishna Mission,  
Belur Math, Howrah, Bengal.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

**SWAMI** Abhedananda, lecturer on Vedanta, of Los Angeles, California, attended the sittings of the thirty-first annual convention of the Connecticut State Spiritualist Association in May, 1918 and lectured on the subjects "Spiritual Needs of To-day" and "What is there Beyond the Grave?"

The report of the R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, for the month of June 1918, shows:—

Indoor patients:—There were 10 old cases and 11 newly admitted, of which 12 were discharged cured, 1 died and 8 are still under treatment.

Outdoor patients:—There were 3284 cases of which 630 were new and 2654 were their repeated numbers.

### Summary of accounts:

Receipts, Subscriptions Rs. ...	165-0-0
" Donations "	37-0-0
" Miscellaneous "	18-0-0

Total „ ... 220-0-0

Expenditure Sevashrama Fund ...	212-12-0
„ Building Fund Rs. ...	297-6-3

Total Rs. ... 510-2-3

We have received the report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal for the month of June 1918:—

Indoor patients:—There were 7 old cases, and 28 newly admitted, 27 discharged cured, 2 died, and 6 are still under treatment.

Outdoor patients:—There were 2762 cases of which were 1231 new and 1531 repeated numbers.

Balance of last month	... Rs. 4982-1-3
Total Receipts	... Rs. 288-2-6

Total ... Rs. 5270-3-9

Total Disbursements ... Rs. 194-5-3

Balance in hand ... Rs. 5075-14-6

We beg to acknowledge with thanks the receipts of the following gifts in kind:—H. H. The Maharaja of Jaipur's Sadavrata, Atta 35 srs., Dál 5½ srs., Ghee 2½ srs., Sugar 2½ srs.; Babu Ramlalach, Calcutta, Than cloth 2 pieces; Messrs. B. K. Paul & Co., Calcutta, Allopathic medicines worth Rs. 155-12-6; Messrs. Bhupchand & Sons, Ringale, 9 mds. of wheat worth Rs. 40.



# ग्रन्थालय ग्रन्थालय



अस्ति विद्यते

प्राप्य विद्यते विद्यते।

Katha Upanishad, I, iii, 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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## CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

XIX.

[Place—Belur, monastery in a rented house. Year—1898.

Subjects—Swamiji encourages the disciple to take to trade.—The middle classes of this country have been reduced to misery for want of Shraddha—faith in oneself.—In England, people who are in the service or employment of others are looked down upon.—The unpracticality of the so-called educated people in India.—What is education?—The practicality and self-reliance of the masses in India are greater than those of the gentry.]

The disciple has come to the Math this morning. As soon as he stood up after touching the feet of Swamiji, Swamiji said, "What's the use of your continuing in service any more? Why not go in for some business?" The disciple was then employed as a private tutor in some family. The burden of family-life has not yet come upon him. He spends his days joyfully. Asked about the profession of teaching, Swamiji said, "If one does the work of teaching boys for a long time, he gets blunt in intellect; his intelligence is not manifested. If one stays among a crowd of boys day and night, gradually he gets obtuse. So don't do the work of teaching boys any more."

Disciple.— What shall I do then?

Swamiji.— Why? If you want to live the life of a worldly man and have a desire for earning money, then go over to America. I shall give you directions for business. You will find that in five years you get together so much money.

Disciple.— What business shall I go in for? And where am I to get the money?

Swamiji.— What nonsense are you talking? Within you lies indomitable power. Only thinking, "I am nothing, I am nothing," you have become powerless. Why you alone! The whole race has become so. Go round the world once and

you will find how the life-current of other nations is flowing vigorously. And what are you doing! Even after learning so much, you go about the doors of others, crying, "Give me employment." Trampled under others' feet, doing slavery for others, are you men any more? You are not worth a pin's head! In this fertile country of abundant water-supply, where Nature produces wealth and harvest a thousand times more than in others, you have no food for your stomachs, no clothes to cover your bodies! In this country of abundance, the produce of which has been the cause of the spread of civilisation in other countries, you are reduced to such straits! Your condition is even worse than that of a dog! And you glory in your Vedas and Vedanta! A nation that cannot provide for its simple food and clothing, which always depends on others for its subsistence—what is there for it to vaunt about? Let your religious observances now flow away with the current of the Ganges, and be first prepared for the struggle for existence. People of foreign countries are turning out such golden results from the raw materials produced in your country, and you, like asses of burden, are only carrying their load. The people of foreign countries import Indian raw goods, manufacture various commodities by bringing their intelligence to bear upon them and become great; whereas you have locked up your intelligence, thrown away your inherited wealth to others, and roam about crying piteously for food!

Disciple.— By what means, Sir, can the means of subsistence be procured?

Swamiji.— Why, the means are in your hands. You blindfold your eyes and say, "I am blind and can see nothing." Tear off the folds from your eyes and you

will see the whole world is lighted by the rays of the midday sun. If you cannot procure money, go to foreign countries, working your passage as a *lascar*. Take Indian cloth, towel, bamboo-work and other indigenous products and peddle in the streets of Europe and America; you will find how greatly Indian products are appreciated in foreign markets even now. In America I found some Mahomedans of the Hugly district had grown rich by peddling Indian commodities in this way. Have you even less intelligence than they? Take, for example, such excellent fabric as the Benares-made *saris* of India, the like of which are not produced anywhere else in the world. Go to America with this cloth. Have gowns made out of this fabric and sell them, and you will see how much you earn.

Disciple.— Sir, why will they wear gowns made of the *saris* of Benares? I have heard that clothes painted diversely are not to the taste of the ladies in those countries.

Swamiji.— Whether they will receive them or not, I shall look to that. It is for you to exert yourself and go over there. I have many friends in that country, to whom I shall introduce you. At first I shall request them to take this cloth up among themselves. Then you will find many will follow suit and at last you won't be able to keep the supply up to the enormous demand.

Disciple.— Where shall I get the capital for the business?

Swamiji.— I shall anyhow give you a start; for the rest you must depend on your own exertions. "If you fail, you get to heaven, if you win, you enjoy the earth." (Gita). Even if you die in this attempt, well and good, many will take up the work,

following your example. And if you succeed, you will live a life of great opulence.

Disciple.— Yes, Sir, so it is. But I cannot muster sufficient courage.

Swamiji.— That is what I say, my son, you have no *Shraddha*—no faith in yourself. What will you achieve? You will have neither material nor spiritual success. Either put forth your energy in the way I have suggested and be successful in life, or throw aside everything and take to the path we have chosen. Serve the people of all countries through spiritual instructions,—then only will you get your dole of food like us. If there is no mutual exchange, do you think anybody cares for any other? You observe in our case that because we give the householders some spiritual instructions they in return give us some morsels of food. If you do nothing why will they give you food? You observe so much misery in mere service and slavery of others, still you are not waking up; and so your misery also is never at an end.—This is certainly the delusive power of Maya! In the West I found that those who are in the employment of others have their seats fixed in the back rows in the Parliament; while the front seats are reserved for those who have made themselves famous by self-exertion, or education, or intelligence. In Western countries there are no botherations of caste. Those on whom Fortune smiles for their industry and exertion, are alone regarded as leaders of the country and the controllers of its destiny. Whereas in your country, you are simply vaunting of your superiority in caste. So much so that you cannot even get a morsel of food! You have not the capacity to manufacture a needle and you dare to criticise the English,—fools! Sit at their feet and learn of them the arts,

the industries and the practicality necessary for the struggle for existence. You will be esteemed once more when you will be fit. Then they too will pay heed to your words. Without the necessary preparation, what will mere shouting in the Congress avail?

Disciple.— Sir, all the educated men of the country have joined it.

Swamiji.— Well, you consider a man as educated if only he can pass some examinations and give good lectures. The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring on strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on his own legs. The education that you are receiving now in schools and colleges is only making you a race of dyspeptics. You are working like machines merely, and living a jelly-fish existence.

The peasant, the shoemaker, the sweeper, and such other lower classes of India have much greater capacity for work and self-reliance than you. They have been silently working through long ages, and producing the entire wealth of the land, without a word of complaint. Very soon they will get above you. Gradually capital is drifting into their hands and they are not so much oppressed with wants as you are. Modern education has changed your fashion but new avenues of wealth lie undiscovered for want of the inventive genius. You have so long oppressed these forbearing masses, now is the time for their retribution. And you shall become extinct in your vain search for employment, making it the be-all and end-all of your life.

( To be continued ).

## OCCASIONAL NOTES.

**T**HE question whether the Upanishads teach only Jnana (Knowledge), or Jnana and Bhakti (Knowledge and Love), was the subject of a discourse on "the Upanishadic doctrine of Love" by Pandit Sitanath Tattwabhusan in the Sadharan Brahma Samaj Mandir. The learned lecturer opines that the Upanishads teach a unity-in-difference of Brahman and individual souls and are opposed to the teaching of Absolute Monism or absolute identity of individual soul and Brahman. Indeed the view of unity-in-difference, which implies man's consciousness of God as a distinct Reality, though he is essentially related to Him, represents the standpoint of the Qualified Monism of Vedantic thought as expounded by Sri Ramanuja; whereas the view of the absolute identity of Jiva and Brahman as an Abstract Universal, excluding the differences of the universe, is the standpoint of Monism as represented by Sankara and his school.

It is easy to pick out sentences from the Upanishadic texts in support of either of these positions and to contend, as has been done by writers of sectarian schools, that one and one only is the postulate of the Upanishads, to the exclusion of others. But we should, in justice to the very Upanishads we revere, seek out a better explanation, which will interpret them not in the spirit of militancy or secession of one portion from another, but seek to include them all in a harmonious vision, showing the place of each in the general march of Vedantic thought. This eclectic spirit of interpretation is the very soul of our indigenous system of criticism, as

against the spirit of secession and militancy which marks the whole history of theological discussion in the West. That one view of God may be apparently contradictory to another and yet may not be inconsistent with it, but rather a development of the other, which may also exist and have a place side by side with it, is native to the soul of Indian spiritual consciousness.

It is idle to contend that the Upanishads teach only the Qualified Monism of unity-in-difference to the exclusion of Unqualified Monism, or absolute unity excluding all differences, or *vice versa*. They teach both, and as the Swami Vivekananda says, "They are but different conceptions leading to the final conclusion that both Dualistic and Monistic conceptions are necessary for the evolution of the mind, therefore the Vedas preach them." "It is my attempt to show that the Vedantic schools are not contradictory, that they all necessitate each other, all fulfil each other and one is, as it were, the stepping stone to the other, until the goal, the Advaita, the Tattvamasi, is reached." Indeed, in many chapters of the Upanishads it can be shown that the progress of thought is from the dualistic or quasi-monistic to the monistic phase; they begin with dualistic ideas of worship, but round off with Absolute Monism in which all difference is merged in unity-without-difference. In the very chapter of *Brihadaranyaka* Upanishad (Second Chapter, Fourth Brahmana) from which the learned lecturer quotes, "Navā are patyuh kámaya patih prio bhavati" etc.

(Behold, it is not for the sake of the husband that the husband is dear, but for the sake of the Self the husband is dear), as implying man's love of God as a Reality distinct from, though essentially related to him,—ends off with the idea of Brahman as an absolute reality excluding all the differences of the universe, in the words—यत्र हि द्वैतमित्र भवति तदितर इतरं परमात्मा, इतरं इतरं शृणुयोति...यत्र वा अस्य सर्वमालैवाभूत्तत्केन कं परोन्तत्केन कं शृणुयात् etc. “For when there is, as it were, duality, then one sees the other, one hears the other, but when the Self only is all this, how should one see another, how should one hear another?” In the face of such explicit statement it is but temerity to assert that the Upanishads speak only of difference-in-unity of Jiva and Brahman and not absolute unity without difference. The true position of the Upanishads is that they teach the quasi-monistic and monistic phases of thought, as necessary for the evolution of the mind, and as one developing into the other.

The fear that assails our present individualised consciousness is that if the Absolute Monism is reached—when all duality will be merged in a Unity excluding all differences, it will mean the loss of all sweetness of the diversity of relations in love, knowledge, and action based on duality, which constitutes the nexus of our worldly and social life. When confronted with Absolute Monism, the first thought and words that occur to one unaccustomed to it are, “we shall lose our individuality.” But few stop to understand that Absolute Monism implies no loss of our being, either qualitatively or quantitatively. The Impersonal is not the negation of personality, but the perfection and culmination of it. It indeed carries the personality to the highest synthesis of

love and knowledge, from which source all the sweetness of our personal love and the diversity of knowledge flow. We may, in the highest unity of Brahman, miss our personal objects of love and the diverse objects of knowledge and interests as personality or diversity, which have such a fascination for us in this world of relativity to which we desire to cling; but we will enjoy them and receive them in a more intense way, as being absolutely one and identified with us in the soul and hence nearest to us. The philosopher undaunted by the superstition of personality and diversity on his own part and on that of others must assert that absolute identity, excluding all differences, is the highest synthesis of thought and the high water-mark of religious realisation, that principle is superior to personality, that all things that have name and form are subject to the All that has none.

The highest Monism cannot be stated in terms of relative consciousness; it is not an object of speech or thought, but a fact of “transcendent perception” (*aparokshā-nubhuti*), where words and thought fail. For the attempt to indicate, state or relate it, will break the Absolute Monism and introduce one element of diversity. Advaitism made practical, that is, brought down within the domain of speech and thought, becomes *Visishtādvatism*,—the absolute, undifferentiated Unity becomes a unity-in-difference. The lecturer points out, “There is no basis for *Sādhan*, even the culture of *Jnana* (Knowledge), in Absolute Monism, and if the Upanishads are interpreted as teaching a doctrine of unity-in-difference, they are not mere *Jnana-shastras* but *Bhakti-shastras*.” But so long as one says, “I am the Brahman,” he is an *upāsaka* who seeks to attain

unity, and not a *Jnani* who has attained unity, for there is the semblance of duality involved in it. But the *Sadhaka* of the *Jnana-marga* (Path of Knowledge) knows that ultimately he is one with the Brahman, that seen through the forms of the mind, the one unit existence has split itself into duality ; and by the help of this duality necessitated by the limitations of his mind, he wants to work up to the Absolute Unity of the Brahman, when the mind will be transcended and its limitations cast away. In Sankara's commentary on the Vedanta Sutras, in answer to the *purvapaksha* (*prima facie* view), how the unit Brahman, excluding all differences, can be attained by the *sravana, manana, nididhyásana* (hearing, thinking and meditating) of scriptural statements about Its existence, which involve diversity of words and thoughts, the reply is put forward that hearing, meditating etc. will not directly bring about the attainment of Unity, but only serve to destroy the diversity caused by ignorance. The *sadhaka* works on the basis of duality, which is a datum of ignorance necessitated by his present position, in order to inhibit this duality, and reach the unity of Brahman, which is already self-attained and self-established and not to be attained *de novo*. There is thus ample scope for Sadhana or practice in Absolute Monism.

The lecturer says: "According to the advocates of Unqualified Monism, the Upanishads are only *Jnana-shastras*, not *Bhakti-shastras*—scriptures treating only of knowledge, and not of love. *Jnana* (knowledge), they say, only implies unity, whereas *bhakti* is founded on the idea of duality, which is ultimately a datum of ignorance." It is true that according to Unqualified Monism all duality is a datum

of ignorance; but there is all the difference of the poles between the duality of man's love for God and God's love for man—the duality which is involved in *Bhakti-sadhana* as well as in *Jnana-sadhana* as we have seen, and the duality of utter ignorance; the one is the nearing stage of the Ultimate Unity, while the other has completely hidden the Unity, nay, is taking one farther and farther from it. The duality on which the practice of both *Jnana* and *Bhakti* is founded is not absolutely a datum of ignorance, but has a tentative reality of its own necessitated by the standpoint of relative consciousness. Ultimately the Absolute Unity will be reached, for love brings unification, and the personal love for God will perfect itself into the impersonal Love, where Lover and the Beloved will all be realised as one, without any difference.

The lecturer seems to think that Knowledge and Love are cut-and-dried, separate faculties and the aim of the *Jnani* is to realise the absolute union of Jiva and Brahman by a process of glorified intellection, the ultimate existence reached being the Essence of Intelligence, the *Chit*. But *Chit* is the same as *Ananda* or bliss, which involves Love. The three—Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss—are not attributes of Brahman, these are Its very essence; they are not three separate attributes but three-in-one: the same substance when looked at from the different standpoints of relative existence, relative knowledge, and relative love,—the three basal facts of life—is said to be Sachchidananda (Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss). In the ultimate synthesis the difference between Knowledge and Love is resolved into a Unit Substance in which *Jnana* and *Bhakti*, *Knowledge* and *Love*,

become convertible terms. There seem to be different powers and faculties on the surface of consciousness, such as moral, aesthetic, intellectual, or emotional, but in their ultimate synthesis they are homogeneous. From the same substance flow all these diverse faculties which constitute the dowry of the human mind.

Love and Knowledge involve and shade into each other by imperceptible gradations. Even in the practice of Knowledge, which includes the hearing, thinking and meditating on the Brahman, Bhagavan

Sankara in the course of explanation says that "As the loving wife meditates on her loving husband, so a kind of eager and continuous remembrance is meant." This involves an element of love and devotion even in the practice of Jnana. The love on which Bhakti is based will also end in the Knowledge of the oneness of all without any difference, when Love, Lover and Beloved will be one. Jnana, based on philosophical reasoning, will culminate in the Essence of Intelligence which will also be realised as Infinite Love. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna pure Love and pure Knowledge are one and the same.

#### CASTE AND INDIAN CULTURE.

**T**HE Indian civilisation has a distinctness and speciality of its own, and in spite of the bewildering complexity of its outward forms, it is regulated by a supreme norm and inhabited by a soul of its own. The history of its unfoldment stands explained in the light of its peculiar *eidos*; and from beneath its surface manifestation of political turmoil, confusion and disorganisation, shines the soul—sometimes effulgent, sometimes dimmed in lustre. Western writers and historians find in the Indian people a hopeless mass of contradictions with conflicting races, customs, languages and religions, without any cementing factor binding them together into any approach of unity. It is because they are looking for unity in the outward crust and not in the real soul of the people.

The *raison d'être* of Indian existence is not the perfection of the social state, but perfection in realms of thought and spirituality. The Indian mind is for ever convinced that perfection is not to be at-

tained from without, but is a spontaneous outflow from within. It does not recognise the biological phenomena of natural selection, struggle for existence, and of survival of the fittest as essential for human evolution. These may obtain in the world of animal life, but with the awakening of reason in man, these factors of animal evolution are regulated, nay, sought to be eliminated and transcended, or at any rate kept down within the lowest limits of animal necessity. Social salvation or the elimination of all evil from the outward form of human society is impossible: an objective millennium is a contradiction in terms. That society in course of evolution will attain to such a state when each individual and nation will attain the maximum of power, wealth and prosperity without any limitation is an impossibility. In the realms of finite society, the sum of attainable wealth, power and enjoyment is limited, and the demand has also to be restricted by the inherent limitations of the supply. The limit to

my freedom is set by your freedom, my need for enjoyment is restricted by yours; my wealth means your poverty, my prosperity spells your misfortune. So that the social consciousness of the East is thoroughly imbued with the sense of limitation, balance and measure; hence there is willingness to subordinate the individual to the social good. If individual egoism were allowed unrestricted operation in society, it would create an *impasse*, by a most unequal distribution of wealth and prosperity, of work and leisure; the operation of individual self-interest will disturb the balance of society by the conflict of opposing groups. Hence communalism, which has identified the interests of the individual with those of caste or the social group, forms the characteristic of the stable civilisation of the world.

The point of variation of unrestricted individual action and freedom was not put in the social body. The Indian mind was thoroughly broken in to the conception of the subordination of the individual to the society; hence arose the communalism of Indian society, with its communistic rules of life. The basal idea is that society has a right to dictate to put a curb to my individual passions or ambitions for the sake of the good of the whole social body. And social groupings were made not on the basis of individual and political efficiency but for satisfying the few primary needs, which were kept down to the lowest limits of animal necessity, and primarily for the intellectual and spiritual needs.

But the real point of variation of unshackled freedom was in the realm of spirituality. The Indian mind is individualistic. Our national philosophy of the Vedanta declares not only that all men are

essentially equal, but that all men are divine. The person who realises his imminent divinity is said to attain perfection and is put above all social rules and conduct. The exaltation of the super-social over the social is the characteristic feature of Indian culture and society. Into the super-social state all have the right to enter, and there all are equal and command the allegiance and homage of all grades of society. The perfect right of every one in the super-social state to choose his own path unhampered by dogmas or opinions of any group is recognised and allowed. The theory of *Ishtam* or the chosen Ideal gives freedom to all to follow his own path, and nobody would be persecuted for that. In spite of the diverse religious sects, ideas, and systems of philosophy, the religious genius of the people has discovered the underlying unity of forms of religious thought and declared it as far back as in the Vedas—"एक सत्यम् बहुधा वदन्ति"—"The truth is one, sages call it variously."—This is the one theme of Indian spiritual thought which has permeated the whole course of historical evolution, giving a wonderful harmonising spirit to its religious culture. All through the course of our history, religious personages have arisen voicing this unity of culture, composing the clash of conflicting sects, and harmonising the manifold schools of religious thought. In the age of the Gita we find Sri Krishna declaring the unity and underlying harmony of all paths leading to the same goal in the words: "In Me they are all threaded like pearls in a string." Sankaracharya did a similar task of unifying the Vedic culture, although on a small scale. Nanak and Kabir also preached the same wonderful vision of unity in religion. Lately, in the nineteenth century, one great sage was born—Sri Ramakrishna

Paramahansa—whose life, more than his teaching, was the embodiment of the whole culture of the nation, who showed the unity and harmony of the Vedic, the Puranic and Tantric elements of Indian culture.

If the union of a people lies in the unity of a common heritage of traditions and ideals, it is abundantly present in Indian culture, nay, the whole genius of the people has been devoted in the long course of its history to discover and keep it shining. As the Swami Vivekananda says, "Union in India means a union of hearts that beat to the same spiritual tune." The common bases of Hinduism have been emphasised anew, its unity brought out in bold relief and placed before the unobstructed gaze of all. That was the life-work of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The discovery of the unity of Indian life and culture was their persistent search and their brightest achievement. The only condition of a healthy existence for us lies in recognising these common bases and our practicality in working them out in their details.

In our spiritual and ethical culture a unity has been maintained in the midst of a wonderful variety and manifoldness of religious thought, an infinite liberty to think and live our own way. Before this unity all distinctions of language, race, and social custom melt away. The ethnic types which form the physical body of Indian civilisation are made up of various elements, in the composition of which the Aryan, the Dravidian, the Greek, the Hun, the Chin and the Scythian have poured their blood. But all have been brought under the sway and stamped by the impress of Aryan culture, and welded into a homogeneous body "in India race difficulties, linguistic difficulties, social

difficulties, melt away before the unifying power of religion." So long as the consciousness of this unity of religious thought remains, differences of race, language and social customs do not constitute separatistic factors; the Indian mind bridges over the gulf and finds the consciousness of unity in the unification of religion. The real bond is the bond of religion.

The Indian mind distrustful of the free and unchecked play of the individual passions in the realm of society, has hedged in the individual within the barrier of communalism. The interests of the individual are identified with those of the family and of the caste to which he belongs. In India, progress in the social scale is achieved by the progress of the whole group, and any caste which appropriates the culture or the qualities of a higher one rises in the social scale and there is nothing to prevent it. But caste, when it degenerates into an exclusive body claiming exclusive privileges and denying right to others, becomes an anti-social factor. Then instead of being a training-ground for undeveloped souls, instead of being stepping-stones to the attainment of the equality of the spirit, it undermines the foundations of the super-social. That one class should make a close reserve of intellectuality another of wealth, and refuse access to others, constitutes the tragedy of human history. It is when classes in society petrify into exclusive rings that they are a check against healthy class-formation which is the soul of all society, and become the germ of social evil. There should be opportunity for the healthy uprise of the lower classes to the higher ones as they attain the higher level of social improvement. Society is ever renewing itself from the base. As the higher ones go up the scale, the lower orders also come up and

take the place of those that have gone up. But the tragedy of human society is that when real worth which raised a class of people to a high social scale has degenerated, that class seeks to protect its privileges by the creation of outward barriers, and lays claim to *exclusive* privileges, thus hindering the play of healthy caste-formation. As Swami Vivekananda says: "Every frozen aristocracy or privileged class is a blow to caste and is not caste. The original idea of caste was this freedom of the individual to express his nature, his Prakriti, his *jati*, his caste, and so it remained for thousands of years. The present caste is not the real *jati*, but a hindrance to its progress. It really has prevented the free action of *jati*, that is, caste or variation."

We have now to translate the freedom and equality of the spiritual thought to society. This freedom and equality will no doubt manifest itself through the forms of communistic life prevalent in Indian society, but it will deal a death-blow to all exclusive privileges that attempt to make a close reserve of intellectuality, of wealth, or of social liberty. The oneness of Vedantic thought, the divinity of man, has to be practically worked out in the social body, for the uplift of the masses of India. It will enjoin on the Brahmana to distribute his culture, his intellectuality to the masses, and it will enjoin on the Sudra not to seek to pull down the Bráhmaṇa to his level but to rise in the social scale by appropriating the culture and the spirituality of the Bráhmaṇa. It will enjoin on each caste to serve the social body by means of its peculiar endowment of qualities.

Indeed that has always been the process of caste-formation in India. When any number of men adopt the occupation

and *achara* and the culture of a higher caste, they separate themselves from their caste and form a group of their own, regarding themselves as of a higher status, and in course of a generation or two, society recognises it. In India, the rise in the social scale is brought about not by the rise of individual members who make common cause with higher caste, but the rise in social status of the whole group to which the individual belongs.

Therefore, in the words of Swami Vivekananda, "The time is come when the Advaita is to be worked out practically. The Vedanta has to be brought down from heaven to the earth—this is the present dispensation." Castes will remain, our communal system of life will remain, but in and through all will be felt the bond of unity and the play of social love. For does not our philosophy say that we are all one with the same Lord, that the Divine indwells in every being? The lesson will be taught to each caste to have mutual love and respect and the consciousness of each caste being great in its own place. The glory of the higher castes will lie in serving the social body in the spirit of the Lord immanent and raising the lower classes to the higher level. The lower castes also, instead of trying to level the higher ones, will rise by absorbing their culture. Claims of exclusive privileges, attempts to shut out sections of people from exclusive reserves will be discountenanced, and opportunities should be given to all to rise in the scale by appropriating the highest culture of the land. All barriers should be taken away from the path of individuals expressing their nature, there will be equal chances for all, and scope will be left open to ensure the healthy up-rise of races low in the scale of culture.

## EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

*(Translated from Bengali.)*

### CXLIII.

#### Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

1895.

Dear and beloved,

I have now got lots of newspapers etc. and you need not send any more. Let the movement now confine itself to India. \* \*

It isn't much use getting up a sensation every day. But avail yourselves of this stir that is rise all over the country, and scatter yourselves in all quarters. In other words, try to start branches at different places. Let it not be an empty sound merely. You must join the Madrasees and start associations etc. at different places. What about the magazine which I heard was going to be started? Why are you nervous about conducting it? \* \* Come! Do something heroic. Brother, what if you do not attain Mukti, what if you suffer damnation a few times? Is the saying untrue—

“मनसि वचसि कथे पुण्यपीयुषपूर्णः ।  
चित्तुवन्दुष्पारभेषीविः शीघ्रमामः ।  
परगुणप्रमाणं पर्वतीकृत्य कोचित् ।  
निजाहृदि निकसम्भः सन्ति सन्तः किञ्चतः ॥”

—There are some saints who full of holiness in thought, word, and deed, please the whole world by their numerous beneficent acts, and who develop their own hearts by magnifying an atom of virtue in others as if it were as great as a mountain.

What if you don't get Mukti? What childish prattle! Lord! They say, even the venom of a snake loses its power by firmly denying it. Isn't it true? What queer humility is this to say, 'I know nothing!' 'I am nothing!' This is pseudo-renunciation and mock-modesty, I tell you. Off with such a self-debasing spirit! 'If I do not know, who on earth does! What have you been doing

so long, If you now plead ignorance? These are the words of an atheist,—the humility of a vagabond wretch. We can do everything, and will do everything! He who is fortunate enough will heroically join us, letting the worthless mew like cats from their corner. — writes, "Well, you have had enough of blazoning. Now come back home." I would have called — a man if he could build a house and call me. Ten years' experience of such things has made me wiser. I am no more to be duped by words. Let him who has courage in his mind and love in his heart come with me, I want none else. Through Mother's grace, single-handed I am worth a hundred thousand now and will be worth two millions. \* \* There is no certainty about my going back to India. I shall have to lead a wandering life there also, as I am doing here. But here one lives in the company of scholars, and there one must live among fools—there is this difference as of the poles. People of this country organise and work, while *our* undertakings all come to dust clashing against laziness—mis-called 'renunciation'—and jealousy etc. — writes me big letters now and then, half of which I cannot decipher, which is a blessing to me. For a great part of the news is of the following description—that in such and such place such and such a man was speaking ill of me, and that he, being unable to bear the same, had a quarrel with him, and so forth. Many thanks for his kind defence of me. But what seriously hinders me from listening to what particular people may be saying about me is—"त्वल्पश्च कालो बहुश विज्ञा:"—Time is short, but the obstacles are many. \* \*

An organised society is wanted. Let — look to the household management, — take charge of money matters and marketing,

and — act as secretary, that is, carry on correspondence etc. Make a permanent centre, —it is no use making random efforts as you are doing now. Do you see my point? I have quite a heap of newspapers, now I want you to do something. If you can build a Math, I shall say you are heroes; otherwise you are nothing. Consult the Madras people when you work. They have a great capacity for work. Celebrate this year's Sri Ramakrishna Festival with such eclat as to make it a record. The less the feeding propaganda is, the better. It is enough if you have hand-to-hand distribution of the Prasada. \* \*

I am going to write a very short sketch of Sri Ramakrishna's life in English, which I shall send you. Have it printed and translated into Bengali and sell it at the Festival, —people do not read books that are distributed free. Fix some nominal price. Have the Festival done with great pomp. \* \*

You must have an all-sided intellect to do efficient work. In any towns or villages you may visit, start an association wherever you find a number of people revering Sri Ramakrishna. Have you travelled through so many villages all for nothing? We must slowly absorb the Hari Sabhas and such other associations. Well, I cannot tell you all,—if I could but get another demon like me! The Lord will supply me everything in time. \* \* If one has got power, he must manifest it in action. \* \* Off with your ideas of Mukti and Bhakti! There is only one way in the world,—“परोपकाराय हि सत्तं जीवित,” “परार्थं प्राज्ञ उत्सुज्जेत्!”—The good live for others alone. The wise man should sacrifice himself for others. I can secure my own good only by doing your good. There is no other way, none whatsoever. \* \* You are God, I am God, and man is God. It is this God manifested through humanity who is doing everything in this world. Is there a different God sitting high up somewhere? To work, therefore!

B--- has sent me a book written by S---. \* \* From a perusal of that work B--- has come to know that all the people of this world are impure and that they are by their very nature debarred from having a jot of religion; that only the handful of Brāhmaṇas that are in India have the sole right to it, and among these again, S--- and B--- are the sun and moon, so to speak. Bravo! What a powerful religion indeed! In Bengal specially, that sort of a religion is very easy to practise. There is no easier way than that. The whole truth about austerities and spiritual exercises is, in a nutshell, that I am pure and all the rest are impure! A beastly, demoniac, hellish religion this! If the American people are unfit for religion, if it is improper to preach religion here, why then ask their help? \* \* What can remedy such a disease? Well, tell S--- to go to Malabar. The Raja there has taken his subjects' land and offered it at the feet of Brāhmaṇas. There are big monasteries in every village, where sumptuous dinners are given, supplemented by presents in cash. \* \* There is no harm in touching the non-Brahmin classes when it serves one's purpose, and when you have done with it you bathe, for the non-Brahmins are as a class unholy and must never be touched on other occasions! Monks and Samiyasins and Brāhmaṇas of a certain type have thrown the country into ruin. Intent all the while on theft and wickedness, these pose as preachers of religion! They will take gifts from the people and at the same time cry, 'Don't touch me!' And what great things they have been doing!—“If a potato happens to touch a brinjal, how long will the universe last before it is deluged?” “If they do not apply earth a dozen times to clean their hands, will fourteen generations of ancestors go to hell, or twenty-four?”—For intricate problems like these they have been finding out scientific explanations for the last two thousand years,—while one-fourth of the people are starving. A girl of eight is

married to a man of thirty and the parents are jubilant over it. And if anyone protests against it, the plea is put forward, 'Our religion is being overturned.' What sort of a religion have they who want to see their girls becoming mothers before they attain puberty even, and offer scientific explanations for it? Many, again, lay the blame at the door of the Muhammedans. They are to blame, indeed! Just read the *Grihya Sutras* through and see what is given as the marriageable age of a girl. \* \* There it is expressly stated that a girl must be married very young. The entire *Grihya Sutras* enjoin this.

And in the Vedic *Aswamedha* sacrifice worse things would be done. All the *Brahmanas* mention them, and all the commentators admit them to be true. How can you deny them?

What I mean by mentioning all this is that there were many good things in the ancient times, but there were bad things too. The good things are to be retained, but the India that is to be, the future India—must be much greater than ancient India. From the day Sri Ramakrishna was born dates the growth of Modern India and of the Golden Age. And you are the agents to bring about this Golden Age. To work, with this conviction at heart!

Hence, when you call Sri Ramakrishna an Incarnation, and at the same breath plead your ignorance, unhesitatingly I say, "You are false to the backbone!" If Ramakrishna Paramahansa be true, you also are true. But you must show. \* \* In you all there is tremendous power.—The atheist has nothing but rubbish in him.—Those who are believers are heroes. They will manifest tremendous power. The world will be swept before them.—"Sympathy and help to the poor;"—"Man is God, he is Narayana;"—"In Atman there is no distinction of male or female, of Brahmana or Kshatriya, and the like;"—"All is Narayana from the Creator down to a clump of grass." The worm is

less manifested, the Creator more manifested. Every action that helps a being manifest its divine nature more and more is *good*, every action that retards it is *evil*.

The only way of getting our divine nature manifested is by helping others do the same.

If there is inequality in nature, still there must be equal chance for all—or if greater for some and for some less—the weaker should be given more chance than the strong.

In other words, a Brahmana is not so much in need of education as a Chandala. If the son of a Brahmana needs one teacher, that of a Chandala needs ten. For, greater help must be given to him whom nature has not endowed with acute intellect from birth. It is a mad man who carries coals to Newcastle. The poor, the down-trodden, the ignorant, let these be your God.

A dreadful slough is in front of you—take care; many fall into it and die. The slough is this, that the present religion of the Hindus is not in the Vedas, nor in the Puranas, nor in Bhakti, nor in Mukti—religion has entered into the cooking-pot. The present religion of the Hindus is neither the path of Knowledge nor that of Reason,—it is "Don't-touchism."—"Don't touch me!" "Don't touch me!"—that exhausts its description. See that you do not lose your lives in this dire irreligion of "Don't-touchism." Must the teaching आत्मवत्सर्वप्रतेर्ष— "Looking upon all beings as your own self"—be confined to books alone? How will they grant salvation who cannot feed a hungry mouth with a crumb of bread? How will those who become impure at the mere breath of others, purify others? Don't-touchism is a form of mental disease. Beware! All expansion is life, all contraction is death. All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives, he who is selfish is dying. Therefore love for love's sake, because it is the only law of life, just as you breathe to live,

This the secret of selfless love, selfless action and the rest. \* \* Try to help S—if you can, in any way. He is a very good and pious man, but is of a narrow heart. It does not fall to the lot of all to feel for the misery of others. Good Lord! Of all Incarnations Lord Chaitanya was the greatest, but he was comparatively lacking in Knowledge; in the Ramakrishna Incarnation there is Knowledge, Devotion and Love—Infinite Knowledge, infinite Love, infinite Work, infinite Compassion for

all beings. You have not yet been able to understand him. "मुक्तामेन वेद न जैव कश्चित्"—Even learning about Him, most people do not understand Him. What the whole Hindu race has thought in ages, he *Lived* in one life. His life is the living commentary to the *Vedas* of all nations. People will come to know him by degrees. My old watchword—struggle, struggle up to light! Onward!

Yours in service,  
Vivekananda.

## WITH THE SWAMIS IN AMERICA.

### II.

**T**HE Swami Abhedananda did not mix with his students as freely as some of the other Swamis have done. It is true he held social meetings where the students could freely talk and mix with him and he gave one hour each week to meeting personal enquiries, but by nature he was always more or less reserved and in private life he was not easily accessible. He insisted on a certain amount of privacy. This was probably wise and necessary on his part. He gave himself heart and soul to his work and he needed hours of solitude to prosecute his studies and to prepare his carefully thought-out lectures free from outside disturbances. But one could always be assured of his ready assistance, his sympathy and encouragement when one made it a point to approach him.

I rarely visited the Swami in his own rooms but on many occasions I found it possible to have very close and intimate talks with him, when he would give me most valuable advice.

In years there cannot have been much difference between us. The Swami may be my senior by five or six years at the most. But I regarded him as a wise and loving father, a guide who understood my struggles and difficulties and I felt that he loved me as a son. I was exceedingly happy to have found a teacher who had realised that for which I was striving. I considered myself greatly blessed to be guided by one of Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples. And sometimes when shaking hands with the Swami, I thought, 'Now I am touch-

ing the same hand that has done service to the great Master.'

At times, I have doubted whether we can be really helped by others spiritually, whether progress does not depend entirely on our own effort and whether help does not come only from within. But as I look back over the many years that I have known the Swami, I must confess that a teacher is almost always necessary to us. Without sincerity, without effort on our own part, it is true, no help will avail. But a teacher can show us the way. He can open our eyes, can make us see in the right direction and by his advice and encouragement can stimulate our efforts. And where there is a happy relationship between master and disciple, progress is greatly facilitated. Not in vain do the Hindu scriptures advise association with the wise; not in vain do these scriptures ask the student to love and revere his teacher and if possible to render him humble service. "That wisdom the wise beholders of the truth will teach thee by thy reverencing, asking and serving them." Gita iv. 34.

We have to dig and we have to dig hard, but it is of great value to have it pointed out to us where and how we have to dig. Without guidance the road is difficult to find and hard to travel. "That ancient, narrow path stretching far away, it is sharp as the edge of a razor and hard to pass over; dangerous is that path for mortals to tread." Has any one found it different? It is therefore that the Rishi added: "Arise, awake, seek out the

great ones and get understanding." Shall we then not be filled with love and devotion towards those who stretch out a helping hand to us? Can our gratitude ever repay what they have done for us?

Gradually I became acquainted with my fellow-students, an acquaintance which in some cases has ripened into close friendship. These were happy days, these early days of sincere and enthusiastic search for wisdom and realisation. There was so much to learn, to read, to discuss. It was a new life, a quickened life, a lifting of the mind into new regions of thought and being. We were on the alert. Every scrap of information, every new book or picture was to us a source of real happiness and inspiration.

We heard about the Master, Sri Ramakrishna, how he had struggled and wept for his Divine Mother, how day and night he prayed for Her vision, how he forgot food and sleep and even his body in his yearning search for Her; and how at last the battle was won, the body was subdued and the Mother revealed Herself in all Her glory. What inspiration we drew from the account of that holy and perfected life! And then came the story of the greatest of his disciples, the Swami Vivekananda, whom then we had not met. How swept onward by a spiritual torrent he, then a mere boy, ran one day to Sri Ramakrishna's room at Dakshineswar to put to the sage the startling question: "Sir, have you seen God?" And the Master's reply: "Yes, my boy, I have seen God and I shall lead you on the way that you may also see Him." Is it strange that we hung on the words of him who brought these revelations to us? Is it strange that we feel eternally grateful to him who thus quickened our spirit? I, for one, pray that I may never forget and that I may never lose my gratitude for the help received from the Swami Abhedananda in these early days.

I had now become a sincere student of Vedanta. Externally my life was uneventful, an even flow of routine life. I followed my occupation which involved little effort and left me much time to pursue my study and practice of Vedanta. I spent much time at the Vedanta headquarters where I tried to make myself useful to some extent and I was in close contact with the Swami. I did not miss a single lecture or class. And I

used to go to the Swami for help when I was in doubt or difficulty. How patient and kind the Swami always was!

The Swami taught us how to meditate, he taught us how to pray. "From the unreal lead us into the Real, from darkness lead us into Light, from death lead us into Immortality; come to us, thou Destroyer of all ignorance and protect us by thy compassionate face for ever and ever, protect us from all evil thoughts and desires and let us always remember that we are Spirit divine." What a wonderful prayer! Who uttered this prayer first, when and where? To answer this question we would have to look far back through the centuries of Indian history. Was it first wrung from the heart of a Rishi rapt in meditation on the bank of the Ganges? The earliest record of this prayer is found, I believe, in the Brihadáranyaka, one the oldest Upanishads. And ever since, for thirty centuries or more, it has been on the lips and in the hearts of the Hindus. And now at last this ancient prayer had come to us in the West.

To be able to cry out from the bottom of one's heart: Lead us into the Real, lead us into Light, make us Immortal, make us remember that we are Spirit, and to get even a faint response,—what bliss unspeakable! "For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of mortal man the things which God hath prepared for those that love Him."

When you meditate, said the Swami, remember first the great teachers of the world. They have given us the greatest of all gifts, the highest truth. Remember the greatest of all teachers, the Teacher of the universe. Aspire to be His faithful servant. Send thoughts of love to all living beings, pray that all may be happy and peaceful and blissful. Then think of your body, remember, it is the instrument of the soul. We must keep it strong and healthy and make it a useful instrument; we must master the body so that through it we can express our divine nature. Breathe slowly and rhythmically; imagine that you breathe out all that is evil and weak and undesirable and that with every breath you draw in, the divine nature is flowing through you. Then meditate on Him who is the Soul of your soul. Try to feel that you are one with that Infinite, Blissful, Existence etc.

These were some of the invaluable lessons we received from the Swami.

Uneventful and easy-going as my external life was, internally it was a life of great activity, but activity that brought rest and peace, calm and happiness.

I used to visit one or two of my Vedanta friends and we would talk till late hours in the night. And often on holidays I would jump on my bicycle and with one of Swamiji's books in my pocket would set out for a secluded spot in forest or on the sea-shore, where I would read and meditate. There I would pass the day alone. Sometimes one of the Swami's most devoted disciples, one of Swami Vivekananda's Brahmacaris, would accompany me. I valued his company for he knew much about Swamiji and he would tell me all about him. He was very devotional. His little room was like a shrine. The walls were decorated with pictures of the different Swamis. In one corner was a little altar with more pictures and candles and incense. He chanted very beautifully and many an hour I have spent there. We talked and read and meditated there together.

At other times, three of us would go on excursions together. A mountain, some twenty or thirty miles from New York, was our favourite haunt. We would go there some Saturday afternoon, after business hours, take lunch with us and spend the whole night on the top of the mountain. We fixed up a little altar from stones, placed on it the pictures of Sri Ramakrishna and the Swamis, lit a fire, burned incense and meditated. Not another soul was near. The view from the mountain was beautiful over a flat prosperous country,—green fields spotted with villages. The following morning we would watch the sun rise and one of us would chant, "Tat saviturvarenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah prachodyat." "Let us meditate on that adorable and self-effulgent light of Him who has produced this universe; may He enlighten our hearts." And later in the morning faint sounds would reach our ears, as the church bells rang in the distant villages, summoning the devotees to worship. We thoroughly enjoyed these excursions.

And so days passed and weeks and months; it may have been a year. And then the Swami asked us a question that came as a surprise to us,—

a surprise that filled our hearts with joy. He called to himself four of his students and asked them whether they were willing and ready to take the vow of life-long celibacy, whether we were ready to join that most ancient order of Brahmacaris to which all the sages of India belonged. And thus, blessing upon blessing the Swami bestowed upon us. We all consented; we were eager to enlist ourselves for a holy life.

Yes, these were happy days, these early days of spiritual awakening and enthusiasm, now almost twenty years ago. It is pleasant to look back and call them to mind again. It is sweet to remember those days of childlike trust and innocence and longing for holiness. Where are they gone, those days of hope mingled with assurance, when in the flush of our youth we felt that the goal could not be far off? It is not always so pleasant to compare the past with the present. Still, it may be profitable even though it hurts, even though sometimes it wrings our hearts. And at such times it is perhaps a consolation to remember that—as the Swami Abhedananda once told me—spiritual progress is not in a straight line, it is spiral and the downward curve even is on the way to progress. While the fruit is growing we can watch its development almost day by day. But when the fruit has attained its full size, the ripening process is hardly perceptible.

Life cannot be continuous sunshine. And so in our spiritual life there comes a lull after the fresh breeze and we seem to have come to a standstill. The energy seems lacking, insufficient to overthrow the obstacles. Swept along, carried, as it were, on the wings of a strong urge from within, all is smooth sailing. But the time comes, perhaps to everyone, at least for sometime, that we lose vital interest and we find ourselves stranded. We have met with what is called, "the obstacles to Yoga,"—"the dark night of the soul," the mystics call it.

But of this we knew little then. We did not trouble ourselves about the past or the future, we lived in the present. Neither did deep philosophical questions disturb our peace of mind,—the why and how of things. We had grasped a few fundamental truths; these truths we embraced, these truths we wanted to realise and to live. Subtle arguments were not yet undermining our

faith, the mind was not yet thrown into that endless tumult of inward questioning, building up theories to-day, tearing them down to-morrow, constructing and demolishing in turn,—vain struggle of the ego, the battle between heart and intellect. Blessed indeed are they who pass over this stage quickly, till in humility and resignation their ears are opened to the blessed assurance: "My child, you need not know much in order to please Me. Only love me dearly. Speak to Me, as you would talk to your mother if she had taken you in her arms."

In the days of which I write now we seemed to walk on air, we felt strong and buoyant and able to meet all obstacles. Could there be anything too difficult with such a goal in view? We hoped that the Swami would make the vows very strong and binding; they could not be too strict for us. "But if we cannot keep the vows inviolate?" one of us remarked. "We must and we shall keep our vows inviolate!" was the impetuous reply. "And anyhow it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all," was the opinion of a third.

Do I see you smile, dear reader? Remember, we were not children: we were young, but fully grown up; we had seen life in different phases, little was hidden from us. Well! I also smile, but it is a smile of satisfaction, for perhaps we were children after all. And Jesus loved children. Perhaps he also looked kindly on us, for in those days we were very simple. "Suffer the little children to come unto me," Jesus said, "and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." . . . And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them." At least we knocked, even if the door was not thrown wide open, at least we ran, if we did not get the first prize. "No effort is lost," says the Lord Sri Krishna. And we will trust in His words.

And so it came to pass that on the first day of April, in the year 1899, we were initiated. It was Easter Sunday, the great Christian festival, the feast of Christ's resurrection. A few friends, Brahmacharis of the Swami Vivekananda, were invited to witness the ceremony. It took place at the home of one of the students, in the room

where we were in the habit of meeting for meditation. It was all very simple, but none the less impressive.

It was evening. The room had been lighted up and was fragrant with the fume of burning incense. The picture of Sri Ramakrishna had been placed on a small altar covered with gaua cloth and decorated with flowers. We placed our humble offering of fruits and flowers on the same altar. And before this picture we meditated and bowed down before we performed the homa and took the vows. The altar fire was burning. The Swami read Slokas from Hindu scriptures, selected by him for the occasion. Then he chanted Sanskrit verses in adoration of Sri Ramakrishna. These verses were his own composition and ate often chanted by the devotees in India. Then the Swami asked us whether we realised that the step we were about to take was a serious step. He pointed out to us that the order we were about to join was the most ancient order in existence, that the rules of this order were universal and observed by all the sages all over the world: that the badge of this order was purity and that to dishonor this badge was great sin.

He pointed out to us that by joining the order, we were entering upon a new life. As Brahmacharis we had to try, with all our might, to conquer and control our passions, not only lust, but also anger and jealousy, hatred and greed: we should try to realise the divinity in every one and to love all beings equally; we should try to follow the ideal of non-killing, non-injuring others and truthfulness; we had to be chaste in word, thought and deed and always to remember the sexless Spirit we were to renounce marriage and to avoid temptations and not to run after sense-pleasures: we should always keep in mind that we were Spirit divine. And remember, the Swami said, you are consecrating your life for the good of all and for the service of God.

The Swami then asked the other Brahmacharis who were present, whether there was any objection to our entering the order. No! there was no objection. Then, one by one, we were asked to approach the sacred fire and to repeat the vows after the Swami with the customary invocation and oblation of clarified butter into the fire.

This part of the ceremony over, the Swami touched our foreheads with sacred ashes. We received a piece of gerua (ochre) cloth and then with the sprinkling of holy water the Swami gave us our spiritual names: Muktikama, Shantikama, Satyakama and Gurudasa. The meaning of the names was explained: Seeker of freedom, seeker

of peace, seeker of Truth and servant of the Master. The ceremony was over. The old Brahmacharis greeted us as new members of the order and the Swami gave us some of the fruit offerings to break our fast of the day. And then, after some pleasant and genial talk we parted and went home.

A BRAHMACHARIKIN.

### VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from page 237.)

देहोऽहमित्येव जडस्य बुद्धि-  
देहे च जीवे विदुषस्त्वहंधीः।  
विवेकविवानवतो मन्त्रात्मनो  
ब्रह्माहमित्येव मनिः सदात्मनि ॥१३०॥

160. The stupid man thinks he is the body, the book-learned man identifies himself with the mixture of body and soul, while the great man possessed of Realisation due to discrimination, looks upon the eternal Atman as his Self, and thinks, 'I am Brahman.'

[Three classes of people are distinguished in this Sloka, of whom the Advaitist is of course given the highest place.

*Mixture of body and soul*—The average man thinks he is both body and mind acting in unison.]

अन्नात्मबुद्धिं स्यज मूढबुद्धे  
त्वद्भूमांसमेदोस्थिपुरीयराशौ ।  
मर्वात्मनि ब्रह्मगिर्णिर्विकल्पे  
कुरुत्वा शान्तिं परमां भजस्व ॥१३१॥

161. O foolish one, cease to identify thyself with this bundle of skin, flesh, fat, bones and filth, and identify thyself instead with the Absolute Brahman, the Self of all, and thus attain to supreme Peace.

देहेन्द्रियादावसति भ्रमोदितां  
विद्वानहंतां न जहाति यावत् ।  
तावश्च तस्यास्ति विमुक्तिवार्ता-  
प्यस्त्वेष वेदान्तनयान्तदर्थी ॥१३२॥

162. As long as the book-learned man does not give up his mistaken identification with the body and organs etc. which are unreal, there is no talk of emancipation even for him, be he ever so erudite in the Vedanta and morals.

[*Body and organs etc.*—In fact, the whole objective world.

*Erudite etc.*—Mere book-learning is meant. Unless he has realised the state of oneness, he will be a mere talker, that is all.]

स्थायाशरीरे प्रतिविम्बगात्रे  
यत्स्वप्नदेहे हृदि कल्पिताङ्गे ।  
यथात्मबुद्धिस्तव नास्ति काच्चि-  
ज्ञीवच्छरीरे च तर्यैव माऽस्तु ॥१३३॥

163. Just as thou dost not identify thyself with the shadow-body, the image-body, the dream-body, or the body thou hast in the imaginations of thy heart, cease thou to do likewise with the living body also.

[*Shadow-body*—The shadow of thy body.

*Image-body*—the image or reflection of thy body, cast in water etc.

*Dream-body*—the body that thou mayst assume in dreams.

*Living-body*—the gross body, with the Pranas etc.]

देहात्मधीरेव नृणामसदियां  
जन्मादितुःखप्रभवस्य वीजम् ।  
यतस्ततस्त्वं जहि तां प्रयत्ना-  
स्यके तु चित्ते न पुनर्भवाशा ॥१३४॥

164. The identification with the body alone is the root which produces the misery of birth etc., of people who are attached to the unreal; therefore destroy thou this with the utmost care. When this identification caused by the mind is given up, there is no more chance for rebirth.

[ Compare Chhandogya Upanishad VIII. xii. 1.]

**कर्मेन्द्रियैः पञ्चभावश्चितोऽयं  
प्राणो भवेत्प्राणमयस्तु कोषः ।  
यंनात्मवानन्नमयोऽनुपूर्णः  
प्रबत्तंतेऽसौ सकलकियासु ॥१६५॥**

165. The Prâna, with which we are all familiar, coupled with the five organs of action, forms the Vital Sheath, permeated by which the Material Sheath engages itself in all activities as if it were living.

[*Organs of action*--The brain centres which control speech, manual activity, locomotion, excretion and reproduction. See Sloka 92.]

*Material Sheath*--described in Slokas 154 and following.

This activity which the Vital Sheath is here said to impart is again a borrowed one, as will appear from the last line of the next Sloka.

For a description of the Five Kosas (Sheaths) the reader is referred to the Taittiriya Upanishad or chapter 1.

**नैवात्मापि प्राणमयं वायुविकारो  
गन्ताऽऽगन्ता वायुवदन्तर्बहिरेषः ॥  
यस्मात्किञ्चित्कापि न वेच्चीष्मनिएः**

**स्वं वान्यं वा किञ्चन नित्यं परतन्नः ॥१६६॥**

166. Neither is the Vital Sheath the Self--because it is a modification of Vayu and like the air it enters into and comes out of the body, and because it never knows in the least either its own weal and woe or those of others, being eternally dependent on the Self.

[*Vayu*: The Prâna-Vâyu or life-force is meant here. The word commonly means air, which brings in the comparison with the air in the next line.

*Enters into &c.*--i. e. as breath, which is its gross manifestation.]

**ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि च मनश्च मनोमयः स्या-  
त्कोशो ममाहमिति यस्तु विकल्पहेतुः ।  
संज्ञादिभेदकलनाक्षितो बलीयां-  
स्तपूर्यकाशमभिपूर्य विजृम्भते यः ॥१६७॥**

167. The organs of knowledge together with the mind form the Mental Sheath,--the cause of the diversity of things, such as 'I' and 'mine.' It is powerful and endued with the faculty of creating differences of name etc. It manifests itself as permeating the preceding, i. e. Vital Sheath.

[*Organs of knowledge*--The brain centres which control sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. See Sloka 92.]

**पञ्चेन्द्रियैः पञ्चमिरेव होतृभिः  
प्रचीयमानो विषयात्यधारया ॥  
जात्त्वल्यमानो बहुवासनेन्धने-  
र्मनोमयाग्निर्वहति प्रपञ्चम् ॥१६८॥**

168. The Mental Sheath is the (sacrificial) fire which, fed with the fuel of desires by the five sense-organs which serve as priests, and set ablaze by the sense-objects which act as the stream of oblations, brings about this phenomenal universe.

[The sacrificial fire confers on the Yajamâna or the man who performs the sacrifice, the enjoyments of the heavenly spheres. So the mind also confers on the Jiva or individualised Ego the pleasures of the objective world.

It is the mind that projects the objective universe -- this is the plain meaning. See Sloka 170, below.]

**न ह्यस्यविद्या मनसोऽतिरिक्ता**

**मनो ह्यविद्या भवत्यन्धहेतुः ।**

**तत्त्विन्विनष्टे सकलं विनष्टे**

**विजृम्भते ऽस्मिन्सकलं विजृम्भते ॥१६९॥**

169. There is no Ignorance (Avidyâ) outside the mind. The mind is Avidyâ, the cause of the bondage of transmigration. When that is destroyed, all else is destroyed, and when it manifests, everything else manifests.

[According to Vedanta, there is no actual change in the Self, which is by nature pure and perfect. It is Ignorance or Avidyâ that has covered Its vision, so to say and It appears as limited and subject to change. Now, this ignorance is imbedded in the mind. When the mind is thoroughly purified through Sadhana or discipline, the glory of the Atman manifests itself. This is said to be liberation.

*Destroyed—in the highest or Nirvikalpa Samadhi.]*

स्वप्रेत्यर्थशून्ये सृजति स्वयमक्ष्या

भोक्त्रादिविश्वं मन एव सर्वम् ।

तथैव जाग्रत्यपि नो विरोध-

स्तसर्वमेतन्मनसो विजृम्भणम् ॥१७०॥

170. In dreams, when there is no actual contact with the external world, the mind alone creates the whole universe consisting of the enjoyer etc. And similarly in the waking state also,—there is no difference. Therefore all this (phenomenal universe) is the projection of the mind.

[*The enjoyer etc.—i. e., the enjoyer, the enjoyable and enjoyment: subject, object and their coming into relation.*] ]

सुषुप्तिकाले मनसि प्रलीने

नैवास्ति किञ्चित्सकलप्रसिद्धेः ।

अतो मनःकलिपत एव पुंसः

संसार एतस्य न वस्तुतोऽस्ति ॥१७१॥

171. In dreamless sleep, when the mind is reduced to its causal state, there exists nothing (for the person asleep), as is evident from universal experience. Hence man's relative existence is simply the creation of the mind, and has no objective reality.

[*Universal experience—The subject has been touched on already. See Sloka 121, ante.*] ]

वायुमात्तद्वियते मेघः पुनस्तेनैव नीयते ।

मनसा कल्पयते बन्धो भोक्त्रस्तेनैव कल्पयते ॥१७२॥

172. Clouds are brought in by the wind and again driven away by the same agency. Similarly, man's bondage is caused by the

mind and Liberation too is caused by that alone.

देहादिसर्वविषये परिकल्प्य रागं  
बधाति तेन पुरुषं पशुवद्गुणेन ।

वैरस्यमन्त्र विषवत्सुविधाय पश्चा-  
देन विमोचयति तन्मन एव बन्धात् ॥१७३॥

173. It (first) creates an attachment in man for the body and all other sense-objects, and binds him through that attachment like a beast by means of ropes. Afterwards, the self-same mind creates in the individual an utter distaste for these sense-objects and frees him from the bondage.

[For the double meaning of the word *Guna*, see note on Sloka 76.] ]

तस्मान्मनः कारणमस्य जन्तो-

बन्धस्य मोक्षस्य च वा विधाने ।

बन्धस्य हेतुर्मलिनं रजोगुणै-

मोक्षस्य शुद्धं विरजस्तमस्कम् ॥१७४॥

174. Therefore the mind is the only cause that brings about man's bondage or liberation: when tainted by the effects of Rajas it leads to bondage, and when pure and divested of the Rajas and Tamas elements it conduces to Liberation.

[A reminiscence of the second Sloka of Amrita-bindu Upa.] ]

विवेकवैराग्यगुणातिरेका-

च्छुद्धत्वमासाद्य मनो विमुक्त्यै ।

भवत्यतो बुद्धिमतो मुमुक्षो-

स्ताभ्यां हृदाभ्यां भवितव्यमग्ने ॥१७५॥

175. Attaining purity through the preponderance of Discrimination and Renunciation, the mind makes for Liberation. Hence the wise seeker after liberation must first strengthen these two.

[*Discrimination—between Self and Non-Self. Renunciation—of the Non-self.*] ]

(To be continued.)

## REVIEWS.

*The Renaissance in India.* By James H. Cousins.  
Published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Madras.  
Pp. 294. Cloth-bound. Price not mentioned.

Professor Cousins has already made a name as a poet and critic and it is a pleasure to go through the pages of this delightful book. It consists of eleven chapters, the first of which has given its title to the book. The other subjects dealt with are: "The Arts in Nation-building," "Some Indian Art-origins," "The Bengal Painters: First Impressions—1916," Do.—"Second Impressions—1918," "Ruskin, the Indian Race and Indian Art," "Literary Ideals," "Philosophy and Poetry," "Religion and the Renaissance," "The Poetry of Sarojini Naidu," and "The Orientation of Western Literature." Unlike Western critics in general, Prof. Cousins views India with an eye of sympathy and reverence and has therefore found ample signs of the awakening in the country. And he records his impressions in a picturesque style which compels the reader's attention. The author is an enthusiastic admirer of "the Tagore poetry and the Tagore paintings," of which religion, he says, is the mainspring. In the essay "Religion and Renaissance" Prof. Cousins sets a high value on Arthur Avalon's Tantra publications, but one sadly misses any mention of the Vedantic revival which the Swami Vivekananda, inspired by his Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, has inaugurated in India, the effects of which are seen not merely in the production of a Vedantic literature adapted to the understanding of the present generation, but which has also deeply influenced the foundations of social working. Great credit is due to Arthur Avalon for bringing the harmony of the Tantras into prominence, but what about the man who *realised* through austere practice the truths not only of the Tantras, but of the Upanishads and Puranas as well, and whose whole life was an illustration of those principles? And what should one say of the man who interpreted this wonderful life before India and the whole world, and who represented all that was glorious in ancient India and all that is potentially great in the India of to-day? Has the learned and sympathetic Professor never heard of the Swami Vivekananda, who made

the highest truths of the Vedanta *practical*, and whose inspiration has brought into existence the various Homes of Service and Relief Organisations within the country? We are confident that the author, as he searches further and further for the mainspring of the Renaissance in India, will surely hit upon this potent force and find in the twin-personalities of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda the explanation of the cultural revival that is going on in the country. As it is, however, we have no hesitation in recommending this thoughtful and excellent book to all English-knowing people.

*Survival of Hindu Civilisation—Part I. (The Impoverishment of India and its Remedy).* By Pramatha Nath Bose. Pp. xlvi + 81. Price Re. 1/8.

This is a welcome addition to the series of thoughtful books which Mr. Pramatha Nath Bose has written on Indian subjects. Besides the Introduction, which covers over a third of the book, there are four chapters, dealing with Indications of Prosperity, those of Impoverishment, its Chief Causes, and the Remedy. Under the last head the author recommends with reasoning "the industrial regeneration of India on improved methods by indigenous agency" and "stemming the tide of Western Civilisation so as to reduce the imports of foreign manufactures." Discussion on such subjects is assuredly good, but practice is infinitely better. We want a body of enthusiastic and sacrificing men who will show these things in practice. It is the moral strength that counts in the long run. The book is published by Messrs. W. Newman & Co., 4 Dalhousie Square, Calcutta, and is a bit costly for its size.

*Muhammad Ali—His Life and Services to his country.*—With a Foreword by C. P. Rama-swami Iyer B. A. B. L. Publishers Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 135. Price Re. 1.

The subject of this life-sketch is well-known in the political world of India, and Messrs. Ganesh & Co. have been quite up-to-date in bringing out this neat volume. Among other things the book describes Mr. Muhammad Ali as a Pan-Islamist,

as a Speaker, as a Journalist and as a Poet, and adds three of his lectures. A half-tone portrait is also given.

*The Master as I Saw Him.*—Being pages from the Life of Swami Vivekananda. By his disciple Nivedita, of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. Second Edition. Published by the Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukerji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta. Cloth bound. Pp. 414 + xxv. Price Rs. 2/8. Nice get-up.\*

The book is not new to the readers of the Prabuddha Bharata, having first appeared serially in its pages. It consists of twenty-seven illuminating sketches from the fascinating pen of the late Sister, with four Appendices. It is not easy to understand such a multi-sided personality as the Swami Vivekananda, and specially for one born outside India. But Sister Nivedita happily adopted the right course in this matter and after a preliminary struggle, which every new-comer has to experience, surrendered herself to the extraordinary genius of the Swami, and the result is the masterpiece of character-study that we have before us. When both the Teacher and the disciple are of exceptional powers, then is the right communion of ideas, and one is struck with admiration as one turns page after page of these reminiscences. There is not one false note and every line breathes sincerity. We heartily welcome this edition of the book, and wish it a wide circulation.

*Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita.* Edited with translation and elaborate explanations and comments, in Hindi, by R. S. Narayana Swami. To be had of Adhyatma Pustakalaya, 24 Aminuddaula Park, Lucknow, and other places. Part I. Pp. 213 + 612. Price, Popular Edition Rs. 2. Superior Edition Rs. 3. Cloth-bound.

The Gita is a most wonderful book with the Hindus and a rich mine of spiritual truths. Numerous commentaries, therefore, have been written on it both in the past as well as in the present time. The book under review purports to be an independent commentary which seeks to bring out the real meaning which Bhagavan Sri Krishna intended to convey to Arjuna and through him to the whole world. We do not see how the learned author

can claim this special privilege, as all commentators would be laying a similar claim. It is after all a subjective question. Be that as it may, one thing is plain, that the author has spared no pains to make himself intelligible, and where reputed commentators have explained passages differently, he has mentioned them in footnotes. It is not possible to do full justice to the book within the short space at our disposal, and as we have had time only to look into portions of it, but the paraphrase, context, translation, elaborate explanation, synopsis of chapters and sections, and comments etc., etc., will certainly prove highly useful to those who will patiently go through them. The author is a Sannyasin disciple of the late renowned Swami Rain Tirtha.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

SWAMI Paramananda's visit to Seattle, California, U.S.A., met with overwhelming success. During the few days he spent there he delivered eleven public lectures and held seven private classes. There was an overflowing attendance at all..... All available space was crowded at each meeting and large numbers were turned away..... The Swami was obliged also to devote many hours each day to interviews. Besides these evidences of the interest aroused, many hundreds of books and pamphlets were sold..... There was an insistent demand for a permanent Centre, but the Swami did not feel it possible to consider it for the present. .... One of the audience writes : "Swami Paramananda left yesterday for Portland. He was in Seattle two short weeks. We all appreciated his visit so much and I trust he will establish a Vedanta Centre here. I am sure there are a great many people interested. Many evenings we were not able to seat all the people who came to hear him. Words are not adequate to express our delight in having the privilege of attending these lectures and meditation classes. The Swamiji's teachings are so broad, practical and full of uplifting Truth."

It was arranged that the Swami should deliver three lectures in Tacoma—one at the prison—but owing to the pressure of engagements at Seattle he was obliged to cancel two of these. He left Seattle on the 11th of April, delivered three lectures at

\*To be had of the Prabuddha Bharata Office, Mayavati.

Portland, and after a brief stop in San Francisco, arrived at Los Angeles on the 18th. On the following day he gave a first lecture at the Vedanta Centre, established there by him two years ago, and on Sunday the 21st began a course of public lectures at Symphony Hall. His work will continue there for the present as in previous years.

At the Vedanta Centre of Boston all Services and Classes were held as usual during April, being conducted by Sister Devamata in the Swami's absence. The attendance remained excellent throughout the month.—*Message of the East.*

The following is the report of the Rk. Mission Sevashrama Kankhal, for the months of August and September 1918 . . .

**Indoor patients:** There were 13 old cases and 136 newly admitted, of which 133 were discharged cured, 3 died, 5 left treatment and 8 are still in the Sevashrama. **Outdoor patients:** There were 3059 new cases, and 3721 repetitions of the same.

Last month's balance was Rs. 5031-9-3, and the total receipts Rs. 1713-6-3, of which the sum of Rs 95/- was given by Babu Sunji Kanta Ray Chowdhury of Taki for a room in the proposed general ward for poor sick people, in memory of his father, to be named "Srikanta Room." The total disbursements amounted to Rs. 282-5-6.

The following gifts were received during the months :— Babu Trailokya Nath Banerjee, Roorkee; Two cows; Srijit Nayanathay, Hardwar, One cow; Mahanta Chitghanananda, Kankhal, 1 md. of rice; Mr. S. C. Dass, Calcutta, 1 lb of Quinine.

A correspondent writes:—The presence of Swami Sharvananda in Ceylon greatly awakened the religious spirit among the Hindus of the island. He delivered several lectures on religion and education at Colombo and various parts of Jaffna. At Pettah he delivered two lectures on "The Education that we need" and "Religion as a factor of Civilisation" at the Ridgeway Memorial Hall, on the 27th and 21th September 1918 under the auspices of the Pettah Y. M. H. A. Two other lectures on "The Work before us" and "The Hindu Ideal of life" were delivered at the Nallur Hindu School and Manicpav Hindu College respectively. His presence in Jaffna was the occasion of the opening of many Hindu Vernacular

Schools in the villages. It is the intention of the Swamiji to start an ideal National College at Jaffna to impart higher education to the Hindus. His work is progressing satisfactorily and he is holding a daily class.

### THE MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY.

We beg to acknowledge with thanks the following subscriptions and donations to the above fund from Jan.—Sept. 1918 :—

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All contributions will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged by the undersigned.

Madhavananda,

Secy., M. C. D.

Mayavati, P. O. Lohaghat, Dt. Almora.

**RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD  
RELIEF WORK IN NORTH BENGAL.**

Since our last report, after finishing house to house inspection we have opened five centres in Thana Raninagar, five in Noagaon and two in Thana Nandanali—twelve in all. The Calcutta Vivekananda Society is financing the two centres of Nandanali. Though we are managing them, reports of their work will be published by the Society. Nearly ninety-five per cent. of the recipients are Mahomedans and the recipients numbered 3460 in the third week—the figure includes those of the Nandanali Thana also. Besides weekly doles of rice two hundred twenty pairs of new cloths and a good number of old ones were also distributed from all the centres—the need of which is general and acute. In the course of our inspection we came across numbers of naked and semi-naked figures of both the sexes. In the villages round our Dubalhati, Hasaiganj and Balihar centres there is an extreme want of fodder for cattle. A good number of them have died for want of it. We have already distributed 4000 'attis' of straw in this area and have decided to continue this, for at least a month at a weekly cost of Rs. 250 till the grasses grow. In Hasaiganj centre alone 647 cattle were given fodder. In Raninagar centre, especially in Ratowal, fodder was also distributed with the help of the Noagaon Relief Committee who generously placed in our hands 2000 'attis' of straw.

Below we give the details of weekly distribution of rice from our different centres up to the 5th instant. Dates of first distribution are also given.—

**THANA RANINAGAR.**

Names of centres.	No. of villages	No. of recipients.	Quantity of rice.	Mds.	Srs.
Kashimpur (14-9)	8	90	4 20		
Do. (next week)	17	223	11 6		
Do.	16	224	11 8		
Do	17	212	10 24		
Bill Krishnapur (16-9)	15	55	2 30		
Do. (next week)	18	89	4 18		
Ratowal (16-9)	30	293	14 26		
Do. (next week)	39	822	41 4		
Do.	41	637	31 34		

Raninagar (18-9)	21	182	9	4
Do. (next week)	25	263	13	6
Do. (2-10-18)	29	262	13	4
Bhandaigram (19-9)	22	193	9	32
Do. (next week)	28	275	13	30
Do.	41	406	20	12

**THANA NOAGAON**

Noagaon (23-9)	26	411	22	22
Do. (next week)	56	542	27	7
Dabalhati (23-9)	23	158	7	36
Do (next week)	31	229	11	8
Sailgachi (24-9)	22	275	13	30
Do. (next week)	22	311	15	22
Balihar (27-9)	8	48	2	16
Hasaiganj (1-10)	6	45	2	10

31 Mds of rice were given as temporary relief from all the centres

Since our first appearance on the field the situation has improved. But the flood by destroying nearly 75 p.c of the paddy crop which is the chief means of sustenance and of income to the poor agriculturists of small holding, and by demolishing houses to the extent of 50 p.c and above, have reduced the people to a very miserable condition. Because of this we fear, after a month, or two at the utmost from hence there may be famine in the part if the Government do not come in immediately to help the people with gratuitous relief, agricultural loans, house-building aid, seeds for Rabi crop, of which there is enough time yet, and such other forms of relief.

In conclusion, we beg to offer our heartfelt thanks on behalf of the distressed people to the generous individuals, organisations and Committees who have so far helped us in this work of service with their contributions. We hope and expect their sympathies will continue till the end of our work. As the people are still in need of relief so we appeal to all to help us in offering the same and request them to send their mites, whether it be money or cloth, to one of the following addresses where they will be received with thanks and acknowledged —(1) Secretary, R. K. Mission, Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta. (2) President, R. K. Mission, Math, P.O. Belur, Howrah.

Saradananda  
Secy., R. K. Mission.

10-10-18.

—o—

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR

## Awakened India



विष्वत जाग्रत प्राय वरान्निवेष्टत ।

*Katha Upanishad, I. iii. 6.*

Vol. XXIII, No. 269, DECEMBER, 1918.

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# Prabuddha Bharata



**Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.**

—Swami Vivekananda.

VOL. XXIII ]

DECEMBER 1918

[ No. 269

## CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

XIX.—Continued.

*Subjects.—The masses are now waking up and beginning to demand their legitimate rights from the higher classes.—If the higher classes help them in this matter, it will conduce to the welfare of both.—If the masses are taught in the spirit of the Gita, then instead of giving up their own hereditary calling, they will perform it with greater glory to themselves.—The result that will accrue if the higher classes refuse to help the masses now in the way suggested. ]*

Disciple.— Sir, although our power of originality is less than that of other countries, still the lower classes of India are being guided by our intelligence. So where will they get the power and culture to overcome the higher classes in the struggle for existence ?

Swamiji.— Never mind if they have not read a few books like you,—if they have not acquired your tailor-made civilisation. What do these matter? But they are the backbone of the nation in all countries. If these lower classes stop work where will you get your food and clothing from? If the sweepers of Calcutta stop work for a day it creates a panic, if they strike for three days the whole town will

be depopulated by epidemic outbreak. If the labourers stop work, your supply of food and clothes also stops. And you regard them as low-class people and vaunt about your own culture !

Engrossed in the struggle for existence, they had not the opportunity for the awakening of knowledge. They have worked so long uniformly like machines guided by human intelligence and the clever educated section have taken the substantial part of the fruits of their labour and earning. In every country this has been the case. But times have changed. The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact and making a united front against this, determined to exact their

legitimate dues. The masses of Europe and America have been the first to awaken and have already begun the fight. Signs of this awakening have shown themselves in India too, as is evident from the number of strikes among the lower classes now-a-days. Now the upper classes will not be able to repress the lower, try they ever so much. The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights.

Therefore I say, set yourselves to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, "You are our brothers—a part and parcel of our bodies—we love you and do not hate you." If they receive this sympathy from you, their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold. Kindle their knowledge with the help of modern science. Teach them history, geography, science, literature and along with these the deep truths of religion. In exchange for that teaching the poverty of the teachers will also disappear. By mutual exchange both will become friendly to each other.

Disciple.— But, Sir, with the spread of learning among them, they too will in course of time have fertile brains but become idle and inactive like us and live on the fruits of the labour of the next lower classes.

Swamiji.— Why shall it be so? Even with the awakening of knowledge, the potter will remain a potter—the fisherman a fisherman—the peasant a peasant. Why should they leave their hereditary calling? सहजं कर्मं कौन्तेय, सदोषमिति न लगेत्— "Don't give up the work to which you are born even if it be attended with defects." If they are taught in this way, why should they give up their respective callings?

Rather they will apply their knowledge to the better performance of the work to which they have been born. A number of geniuses are sure to arise from among them in course of time. You (the higher classes) will take these into your own fold. The Brahmanas had acknowledged the valiant king Viswamitra as a Brahmana, and think how grateful the whole Kshatriya race became to the Brahmanas for this act! By such sympathy and co-operation even birds and beasts become one's own—what to speak of men!

Disciple.— Sir, what you say is true, but there yet seems to be a wide gulf between the higher and lower classes. To bring the higher classes to sympathise with the lower, seems to be a difficult affair in India.

Swamiji.— But without that there is no well-being for you upper classes. You will be destroyed by internecine quarrels and fights—which you have been doing so long. When the masses will wake up they will come to understand your oppression on them and by a puff of their mouth you will be entirely blown off! It is they who have introduced civilisation amongst you; and it is they who will then pull it down. Think how at the hands of the Gauls, the mighty ancient Roman civilisation crumbled into dust! Therefore I say, try to rouse these low classes from slumber by imparting learning and culture to them. When they will awaken—and awaken one day they must—they also will not forget your good services to them and will remain grateful to you.

After such conversation Swamiji addressing the disciple said, "Let these subjects drop now—come, tell me what you have decided. Do something, whatever it be. Either go in for some business, or like us come to the path of real Sannyasa,

“आत्मनो नोदाये जगद्विताव च”—“For your own salvation and for the good of the world.” The latter path is of course the best way there is. What good will it do to be a worthless householder? You have understood that everything in life is transitory, “मलिनीदलगतजलमतितरलय तद्गीवनमतिशब्दपलम्”—“Life is as unstable as the water on the lotus-leaf.” Therefore if you have the enthusiasm for acquiring this knowledge

of the Atman, do not wait any more but come forward immediately. “बद्धेव विरजेत् तद्वहेव प्रवजेत्”—“The very day that you feel dispassion for the world, that very day renounce and take to Sannyasa.” Sacrifice your life for the good of others and go round the doors of people, carrying this message of fearlessness—“उत्तिष्ठ जापत प्राप्त वराह निबोधत”—“Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached.”

### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

THE conjoint action of good and evil, of virtue and vice, is one of the basic facts of life. “Each hollow crests the wave,” and good is followed by evil, pleasure by pain, virtue by vice, knowledge by ignorance. Sometimes the clouds sail off from the face of the eternal blue, and man enjoys the unobstructed gaze of his infinite nature, then again a cloud, “no bigger than a man’s hand,” appears in the horizon, which grows bigger and bigger, the sky becomes overcast by piled masses of clouds upon clouds creating primeval darkness. The waters of the lake are covered over by a thick over-growth of weeds and mosses which hide the water beneath, man clears a bit of space and drinks the pure crystal waters of the lake; but before he is aware the moss dances forward from all sides and covers up the cleared space, hiding the underlying waters completely from view. Such is the stuff human life is made of.

---

The greater the rise of the wave, the profounder the depths of the hollow which follow. Split up the electrical energy, and as the positive separates and accumulates, the negative also separates and

accumulates as a counter energy. This polarity of the dual action of two opposing forces constitutes the gist of existence. The higher the pitch of moral perfection, the greater the susceptibility to finer and finer, and hence stronger and more insidious, *vasanas*, desires, passions and impulses,—which are unsuspected by the common people. Even our virtues are going towards destruction and to be alternated by a darker phase, according to the law of change which governs our phenomenal existence.

Both good and evil, virtue and vice are manufactured from a third substance which being controlled and mastered, both good and evil are controlled and one goes beyond the succession of good and evil, virtue and vice. Virtue and vice, holiness and impurity, good and evil are different manifestations in different degrees of one Unit Existence and so long as this Unit Existence is not realised and mastered, there will be no safety in our moral or religious life; we shall be in subjection to the change of good and evil, of virtue and vice. The goal of moral and religious endeavours should be to reach this unity

—the Unit Existence, which is our real self. And when that is known, both good and evil stand controlled, we stand up free, master of ourselves and go beyond the pale of all laws,—of virtue alternating with vice, of good with evil.

A good character is one in which by the continued action of good thoughts and impressions, the bad thoughts and tendencies are held down and kept in check in a corner of the mind. It is not that evil tendencies are completely killed out but their power of working evil is prevented from manifesting itself; and when through inadvertence and slackness in religious or moral culture they are not sufficiently watched and guarded against, they gather force from day to day and subsequently spring up into activity and invade the whole field of conscious activity. This accounts for many cases of slips and blackslidings in religious life. Through the long doing of good acts and thinking of good thoughts, the mind has acquired a certain involuntary power and tendency towards good in spite of itself, and this tendency turns it back from doing evil. But this is no sure and firm ground to stand upon. However long the interval, by the inevitable operation of change of the *gunas*, of the laws of phenomenal existence, virtue will be alternated by vice, good inevitably followed by evil, unless we transcend both good and evil and reach the Absolute and go beyond the pale of all phenomenal laws. The Absolute, beyond phenomena, the *nirguna*, *nirvisesha*, the qualitiless, and undifferentiated Unit, the Brahman, is the final resting ground, reaching which both good and evil, virtue and vice are controlled and we go beyond the operation of all phenomenal laws and attain to safety.

Sri Ramakrishna brings this point home to us very vividly in the following saying of his : Vasistha, a great sage who had attained to a degree of illumination, was observed by Lakshmana as shedding tears in grief smitten by the death of his sons, and turning to his divine brother, Sri Ramachandra, he questioned, "It is indeed strange that such a great sage like Vasistha is shedding tears in *maya* at the loss of his sons," whereupon Sri Ramachandra answered, "There is nothing to be wondered at in this. He who has knowledge, is affected by ignorance also, he who has good is overcome by evil also; therefore, my brother, to reach perfection, go beyond both knowledge and ignorance, good and evil."

It is indeed a very dizzy height to attain to this pinnacle of spiritual perfection, and very few can expect to reach this height in a lifetime. But it is well to put ourselves in mind of the ultimate goal, the real haven of safety, otherwise we are liable to victimise ourselves by self-delusion and ideas of fancied safety. In the course of our religious life we attain to a good deal of control over our *indriyas* (sense-organs and nerve-centres) and feel able to control our motives and inner forces from within; we may not feel any strong evil promptings likely to draw us out. But yet there is no safety. We are still under the *gunas*, under the sway of phenomenal laws, which bring about the alternate play of good and evil, virtue and vice, however great the interval between the two phases. We are now under the influence of good tendencies, as formerly we were under bad, we have not gone beyond the laws of nature, we have not attained to freedom and self-mastery yet by trampling nature's laws under our feet. In the very good

tendencies there lurks the power of the evil, for they are two sisters, the two conjoint phases of nature's laws.

We read in the lives of saints and prophets of a state of realisation, which illustrates the attainment of this unity beyond duality, of a religious mood in which all the apparent duality is obliterated, a state of emotion so levelling and unifying, that all the values of life are engulfed in the vision of unity; the hand of the Lord is seen present in life, and equally so in the direst death; in pain and pleasure, in virtue and vice, in sin as in holiness, in good and in evil. Which to accept and which to avoid, is then the question that rises involuntarily to the lips. Then the eyes lose the power of seeing evil, and the mind loses the power of thinking evil. Swami Vivekananda thus speaks of his Master, "I myself have seen this man standing before those women whom society would not touch, falling at their feet, bathed in tears, saying, 'Mother, in one form Thou art in the street and in another form Thou art the Universe. I

salute Thee, Mother, I salute Thee.' Think of the blessedness of that life, when every woman face becomes transfigured, and only the face of the Divine Mother, the Blissful One, the Protectress of the human race, shines upon it!" This is what we want. Swami Vivekananda also speaks in the same strain: "The whole world worships ease and few dare to worship that which is painful. To rise above both is the idea of freedom. Unless man passes through this gate he cannot be free. We must learn how to worship and love Him in the thunderbolt, in shame, in sorrow, and in sin. All the world has ever been preaching the God of virtue, I preach a God of virtue and of sin in one. Take Him if you dare,—that is the one way to salvation, then alone will come to us the Truth ultimate which comes from the idea of Oneness. . . . Until we see nothing in the world but the Lord and the Lord Himself. All these evils will beset and we will make these distinctions, because it is only in the Lord, in the Spirit that we are one, and until we see God everywhere this unity will not exist for us."

## HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF INDIA

(An unpublished writing of the Swami Vivekananda.)

OM TAT SAT.

Om Namo Bhagavate Ramakrishnaya.

क्षासतो सर्व जातेत!—Existence cannot be produced by non-existence.

**N**ON-EXISTENCE can never be the cause of what exists. Something cannot come out of nothing. That the law of causation is omnipotent and knows no time or place when it did not exist,

is a doctrine as old as the Aryan race, sung by their ancient poet-seers, formulated by their philosophers, and made the corner-stone upon which the Hindu man even of to-day builds his whole scheme of life.

There was an inquisitiveness in the race to start with, which very soon developed into bold analysis, and though in the first attempt the work turned out might be like the attempts of the future master-

sculptor with shaky hands, it very soon gave way to strict science, bold attempts and startling results.

Its boldness made them search every brick of their sacrificial altars; scan, cement and pulverise every word of their scriptures; arrange, re-arrange, doubt, deny or explain the ceremonies; turned their gods inside out, and assigned only a secondary place to their omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Creator of the universe, their ancestral Father-in-heaven; or threw Him altogether overboard as useless, and started a world-religion without Him with even now the largest following of any. It evolved the science of geometry from the arrangements of bricks to build various altars, and startled the world with astronomical knowledge that arose from the attempts to accurately time their worship and oblations. It made their contribution to the science of mathematics the largest of any race ancient or modern, and their knowledge of chemistry, of metallic compounds in medicine, their scale of musical notes, their invention of the bow-instruments of great service in the building of modern European civilisation. It led them to invent the science of building up the child mind through shining fables, which every child in every civilised country learns in a nursery or a school and carries an impress through life.

Behind and before this analytical keenness, covering it as in a velvet sheath, was the other great mental peculiarity of the race—poetic insight. Their religion, their philosophy, their history, their ethics, their politics were all inlaid in a flower-bed of poetic imageries—the miracle of language which they call Sanskrit, or perfected, lending itself to expressing and manipulating them better than any other tongue. The aid of melodious numbers was invoked

even to express the hard facts of mathematics.

This analytical power and the boldness of poetical visions which urged it onward are the two great internal causes in the make-up of the Hindu race. They together formed as it were the keynote to the national character. This combination is what is always making the race press onwards beyond the senses—the secret of those speculations which are like the steel blades they used to manufacture—cutting through bars of iron, yet pliable enough to be easily bent into a circle.

They wrought poetry in silver and gold; the symphony of jewels, the maze of marble wonders, the music of colours, the fine fabrics which belong more to the fairy-land of dreams than to the real—have back of them thousands of years of working of this national trait.

Arts and sciences, even the realities of domestic life, are covered with a mass of poetical conceptions and pressed forward, till the sensuous touches the super-sensuous, and the real gets the rose-hue of the unreal.

The earliest glimpses we have of this race shows them already in the possession of this characteristic, as an instrument of some use in their hands. Many forms of religion and society must have been left behind in the onward march, before we find them as depicted in the scriptures, the Vedas.

An organised Pantheon, elaborate ceremonials, divisions of society into hereditary classes necessitated by a variety of occupations, a great many necessities, and a good many luxuries of life are already there.

Most modern scholars are agreed that surroundings as to climate and conditions

purely Indian were not yet working on the race.

Onward through several centuries, we come to a multitude surrounded by snows of the Himalayas on the North and the heat of the South.—Vast plains, interminable forests, through which mighty rivers roll their tides. We catch a glimpse of different races—Dravidians, Tartars, and Aboriginals pouring in their quota of blood, of speech, of manners and religions—and at last a great nation emerges to our view, still keeping the type of the Aryan; stronger, broader, and more organised by the assimilation.

We find the central assimilative core giving its type and character to the whole mass, clinging on with great pride to its name of "Aryan," and though willing to give other races the benefits of its civilisation, it was by no means willing to admit them within the "Aryan" pale.

The Indian climate again gave a higher direction to the genius of the race. In a land where nature was propitious and yielded easy victories, the national mind started to grapple and conquer the higher problems of life in the field of thought. Naturally the thinker, the priest, became the highest class in the Indian society, and not the man of the sword. The priests again, even at that dawn of history put most of their energy in elaborating rituals; and when the nation began to find the load of ceremonies and lifeless rituals too heavy,—came the first philosophical speculations, and the royal race was the first to break through the maze of killing rituals.

On the one hand, the majority of the priests impelled by economical considerations were bound to defend that form of religion which made their existence a necessity of society and assigned them the highest place in the scale of caste; on the

other hand, the king-caste, whose strong right hand guarded and guided the nation and who now found themselves as leaders in the higher thoughts also, were loath to give up the first place to men who only knew how to conduct a ceremonial. There were then others, recruited from both the priests and king-castes, who ridiculed equally the ritualists and philosophers, declared spiritualism as fraud and priesthood, and upheld the attainment of material comforts as the highest goal of life. The people tired of ceremonials and wondering at the philosophers joined in masses the materialists. This was the beginning of that caste question and that triangular fight in India between ceremonials, philosophy and materialism which has come down unsolved to our own days.

The first solution of the difficulty attempted was by applying the eclecticism which from the earliest days had taught them to see in differences the same truth in various garbs. The great leader of this school, Krishna himself—of royal race—and his sermon, the Gita, have after various vicissitudes brought about by the upheavals of the Jains, the Buddhists and other sects, fairly established themselves as the "Prophet" of India and the truest philosophy of life. The tension though toned for the time did not satisfy the social wants which were among the causes—the claim of the king-race to stand first in the scale of caste and the popular intolerance of priestly privilege. Krishna had opened the gates of spiritual knowledge and attainment to all irrespective of sex or caste, but he left undisturbed the same problem on the social side. This again has come down to our own days, inspite of the gigantic struggle of the Buddhists, Vaishnavas etc. to attain to social equality for all.

Modern India admits spiritual equality of all souls—but strictly keeps the social difference.

Thus we find the struggle renewed all along the line in the seventh century before the Christian era and finally in the sixth, overwhelming the ancient order of things under Sakya Muni, the Buddha. In their reaction against the privileged priesthood they swept off almost every bit of the old ritual of the Vedas, subordinated the gods of the Vedas to the position of servants to their own human saints and declared the "Creator and Supreme Ruler" as an invention of priestcraft and superstition.

But the aim of Buddhism was reform against ceremonials requiring offerings of animals, against hereditary caste, exclusive priesthood and against belief in permanent souls. It never attempted to destroy the Vedic religion, or overturn the social order. It introduced a vigorous method, by organising a class of Sannyasins into a strong monastic brotherhood,

and the Brahmanavadinis into a body of nuns,—by introducing images of saints in the place of altar-fires.

It is probable that the reformers had for centuries the majority of the Indian people with them. The older forces were never entirely pacified but they underwent a good deal of modification during the centuries of Buddhistic supremacy.

In ancient India the centres of national life were always the intellectual and spiritual and not political. Of old, as now, political and social power has been always subordinated to spiritual and intellectual. The outburst of national life was round colleges of sages and spiritual teachers. We thus find the Samities of the Panchalas, of the Kashyas (Benares), the Maithilas standing out as great centres of spiritual culture and philosophy, even in the Upanishads. Again these centres in turn became the focus of political ambition of the various divisions of the Aryans.

(To be continued).

### EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(Translated from Bengali.)

#### CXLIV.

C/o E. T. Sturdy Esq.,  
High View, &c.  
1895.

Beloved Akhandananda,

I am glad to go through the contents of your letter. Your idea is grand but our nation is totally lacking in the faculty of organisation. It is this one drawback which produces all sorts of evil. We are altogether averse to making a common cause for anything. The first requisite for organisation is obedience. I do a little bit of work when I feel so disposed, and then let it go to the

dogs,—this kind of work is of no avail. We must have plodding industry and perseverance. Keep a regular correspondence, I mean, make it a point to write to me every month, or twice a month, what work you are doing, and what has been its outcome. We want here (in England) a Sannyasin well versed in English and Sanskrit. I shall soon go to America again, and he is to work here in my absence. Except S— and R— I find no one else for this task. I have sent money to S— and written to him to start at once. I have requested Rajaji that his Bombay agent may help S— in embarking. I forgot

to write,—but if you can take the trouble to do it, please send through S— a bag of *mung*, gram, and *arhar dal*, also little of the spice called *methi*. Please convey my love to Pandit Narayan Das, Mr. Sankar Lal, Ojhaji, Doctor, and all. Do you think you can get the medicine for G—'s eyes here?— Everywhere you find patent medicines, which are all humbug. Please give my blessings to him and to the other boys. J— has founded a certain society at Meerut and wants to work conjointly with us. By the bye, he has got a certain paper too; send K— there, and let him start a Meerut centre, if he can, and try that the paper may be in Hindi. I shall help a little now and then. I shall send some money when K— goes to Meerut and reports to me exactly as matters stand. Try to open a centre at Ajmere. \* \* Pandit Agnihotri has started some Society

at Saharanpur. They wrote to me a letter. Please keep correspondence with them. Live on friendly terms with all. Work! Work! Go on opening centres in this way. We have them already in Calcutta and Madras, and it will be excellent if you can start new ones at Meerut and Ajmere. Go on slowly starting centres at different places like that. Here all my letters etc. are to be addressed to C/o E. T. Sturdy Esq., High View, Caversham, Reading, England, and those for America, C/o Miss Phillips, 19 W. 38 Street, New York. By degrees we must spread the world over. The first thing needed is obedience. You must be ready to plunge into fire—then will work be done. \* \* Form societies like that at different villages in Rajputana. There you have a hint.

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda.

### THE STORY OF JESUS' BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD.\*

**A**HEN I visited the holy city of Benares for the first time, I met, just before entering the city, a Hindu family. A young mother was riding a donkey and close to her breast she held a tiny baby. And alongside the happy mother walked an elderly man, staff in hand. And, oh, the happy expression on the man's face!

It was a typical Eastern picture. The little family had gone to worship God in Benares. Perhaps it was in obedience to a vow, that the happy couple had undertaken the long pilgrimage, to lay at the feet of Viswanath, the Lord of the Universe, their humble offering in token of their gratitude for the birth of a son.

And to my mind came the story of the holy family, Joseph and Mary, how they had journeyed to Bethlehem and how Mary gave birth to the divine child Jesus in surroundings so similar to those which the young mother must have met at Benares. For the Dharmasalas or resthouses in India are identical in appearance and accommodation with the Khans or caravansaries in Syrian

villages. The Khan is a low structure, built of rough stones, a single story high. The floor, sometimes paved, sometimes of mud is raised a foot or so above the ground. There are a series of small rooms under one roof with no front wall to them. There is no furniture. The traveller brings his blanket and sits on it cross-legged and lies down on it at night. He must cook his own food and draw his own water. Often these places are overcrowded with travellers and one may be thankful if he secures space enough to stretch himself during the night.

In Palestine it not unfrequently happens that back of the Khan, but opening unto it, is a room where the animals are housed. Such seems to have been the case in the little town of Bethlehem. In such a stable, among the hay and straw spread for the animals, Jesus' parents weary with their day's journey, passed the night, for when they came to Bethlehem,—whither the law had called them to register their names,—“there was no room for them in the inn.” In these humble surroundings the baby Jesus was born.

\* Culled from different sources.

Now it happened that not far from Bethlehem, which is surrounded by fields, "there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night, when, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them." And to their happy ears were uttered the good tidings of great joy, that unto them was born that day in the city of David, a Saviour, which was Christ the Lord. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men and good will."

The shepherds, recovered from their first surprise said: "Come, let us go unto Bethlehem and see the thing which has come to pass, which the Lord made known to us."

They went up the terraced hill over the moonlit path, until they reached the summit on which the little town of Bethlehem is built. And there they found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in the manger.

What they saw was a peasant of Galilee, already beyond the prime of life and a young mother with an infant child, whom, since there was none to help her, her own hands had wrapped in swaddling clothes. That is all that the gospel tells us. But who shall say what glories might not have been witnessed by the eye of faith of the simple shepherds? For an ancient narrator tells us that at the awful moment of the nativity, the pole of heaven stood motionless. And the birds were still and the faces of all creatures were looking up. And elsewhere we are told that the childbirth was painless, that the ox and the ass kneeled down to worship Christ in the manger, that immediately after his birth, Jesus told his mother that he was the son of God and that the radiation of light from the manger-cradle illuminated the place till the bystanders were forced to shade their eyes from the heavenly splendour.

Were the narrators of these wonder-events perhaps acquainted with the birth-stories of other Sons of God? Certain it is that there is a great similarity between all these stories. Of Lord Krishna it is written that he was born in a prison, under danger of being killed by the tyrant king Kansa. And we are told that immediately after Sri Krishna was born the whole place was illumined

by a celestial light which emanated from the body of the new-born Saviour. Then angels appeared in the cell singing praises of Krishna and his holy mother and the angels bowed down at his feet and called him God and worshipped him with flowers, while celestial music filled the air. And the seven gates of the prison opened mysteriously and the father escaped with the child.

And of the nativity of Buddha we read how the tree bent down to make a bower about Queen Maya and the earth put forth a thousand sudden flowers to spread a couch, while ready for the bath, the rock hard by gave out a limpid stream of crystal flow. And how among the strangers came a grey-haired saint, Asita, one whose ears long closed to earthly things caught heavenly sounds and heard the Devas singing songs at Buddha's birth. And after touching eight times the dust, he spoke: O Babe! I worship thee! Thou art He! Thou art the Buddh and thou wilt preach the law and save all flesh who learn the law.

And so it is said of the great prophet Zoroaster that angels came to worship and that his birth was heralded by a star and other signs and omens.

How long the Virgin mother Mary and her holy child Jesus, stayed in the Khan, we cannot tell. But probably it was not long, as the early removal of the mother and the child to some more appropriate resting-place, is quite likely. However we are told that on the fortieth day after the nativity, the mother presented herself with her Babe for their purification in the Temple of Jerusalem.

It was on this occasion that the infant Jesus was recognised as the Saviour of mankind by a just and devout Israelite endowed with the gift of prophecy. And it was revealed to this holy man that he could not see death until he had seen the Messiah. And the Spirit led him into the Temple and when he saw the babe Jesus, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen the Saviour." And blessing the parents he departed from the Temple. In the Arabic gospel it is said that Simeon recognised Jesus because he saw him shining like a pillar of light in his mother's arms.

Now it happened, when Jesus was born at Bethlehem that there came wise men from the

East. Who they were we do not know. There is nothing but a mass of confused tradition to throw any light on their rank, their country, or their names. Whether they were Arabian kings or oriental scholars or astrologers, we know not. But St. Matthew tells us that the motive of their journey was to discover the Saviour whose birth had been indicated by a strange star. They first went to Jerusalem expecting to find the child there. And it came to pass that Herod the cruel tyrant-king heard of their arrival. He learned that they had come to worship a child which was to become king of the Jews, for so Jesus was called by the prophets. But this was meant in a spiritual sense and not in a worldly sense as was then generally believed. And Herod, a mere usurper of the throne, became frightened at the news. He summoned to his palace the leading priests of the Jews to enquire of them where this future king was to be born. He received the reply that Bethlehem was the town mentioned by the ancient prophets. Then Herod at once decided to kill the child if it could be found. But he concealed his evil intention and sent the wise men to Bethlehem, bidding them to let him know as soon as they had found the child. For—so the crafty king told them—he wanted to come and offer his homage to the child.

And so the wise men departed. "And lo, the star which they saw in the East, went before them, till it came and stood over the place where Jesus was." And they rejoiced finding the child and they fell down worshipping him. And they opened their treasures and presented unto him gifts worthy of a king.

When they had offered their gifts, the wise men would naturally have returned to Herod to bring him the good news. But they were warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, so they returned to their own land by another way.

We may well suppose that the wise men had told the parents of Jesus about their dream. And when they departed—so it is written—behold the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying: Arise and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt and be thou there until I bring thee word, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Egypt was the natural place of refuge, for there

they were beyond the reach of Herod's jurisdiction. And so the holy family fled by night from Bethlehem to Egypt and later returned to their native home of Nazareth when Joseph had again been assured by a dream that it would be safe to go back.

Legends tell us how on the way back to Nazareth the lions and leopards came to the child but left it unharmed. And roses blossomed wherever his little footsteps trod, the palm-trees at his bidding bent down to give their dates and robbers overawed by the majesty of the child, fled away. The Bible neither tells us where the holy family abode in Egypt, nor how long their exile continued. But legend again tells us that they remained in Egypt two years and that they lived a few miles north-east of Cairo, where a fountain was long shown of which the boy Jesus had made the water fresh and an old sycamore tree under which they had rested.

The flight into Egypt led to a very memorable event. Seeing that the wise men had not returned to him, Herod became furious. He had now no means of identifying the royal infant. But he knew that Jesus whom he regarded as his future rival, was yet an infant at the breast. And as Eastern mothers usually suckle their children for two years, he issued the fell mandate to slay all the children of Bethlehem and its neighbourhood from two years old and under.

Nazareth lies on the slopes of steep and lofty hills. And its houses built of limestone, bowered in vines, palms and olive trees make a bright picture, to which the richness of the surrounding country adds its charm. And in this lovely country Jesus spent nearly thirty years of his mortal life. About his manner of life during these thirty years the gospels are silent. They only tell us that "Jesus grew up in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man."

Jesus was one of a large family of boys and girls whose parents belonged to the working-class, the father being a carpenter.

Quiet and simple and humble was the outward life of the family. The children of Nazareth are dressed in many-coloured garments. And those who have watched their noisy and merry games and heard their ringing laughter as they play beside the fountain, may perhaps form some conception of how Jesus looked and played when he too was a child.

Mary, like others of her rank, would spin and cook food and evening by evening visit the fountain with her pitcher carried on her head. Jesus would play and learn and help his parents in their daily tasks and visit the synagogue on the Sabbath day. And perhaps he would often hide himself in some secluded spot and fold his little hands and pray to God.

Joseph instructed the boy in the law and beyond this and learning to read and write, the book knowledge of Jesus did not go.

Now it was the custom of the parent of the Lord to visit Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And now Jesus being twelve years of age they took the boy with them. It was perhaps the first break in the still, secluded life, his first glimpse into the great outer world.

Nazareth lies from Jerusalem at a distance of about eighty miles. The number who flocked to the Passover might be counted by tens of thousands. They were far more than the city could accommodate. And the vast number of pilgrims would rear for themselves little booths of mat and wicker-work, which provided them with a sufficient shelter for all their wants. The feast lasted for a week,—a week of great happiness and strong religious emotions. And after the feast, the vast caravan would clear away their temporary dwelling places and start on their homeward journey.

The road was enlivened by song and music and the pilgrims would pause to refresh themselves with dates and melons and water from springs and running streams. The veiled women and the stately old men were generally mounted, while the young people with long sticks in their hands, led along by a string their beasts of burden. The boys and children would walk and play by the side of their parents, and sometimes, when tired, get a lift on horse or mule. Among such a sea of human beings, how easy would it be to lose one young boy!

Jesus, probably absorbed in the rush of new and elevating emotions, had lost his parents and "he tarried behind in Jerusalem." A day elapsed before the parents discovered their loss. They probably thought that the boy was with some other group of friends or relatives. But when evening came and the caravan halted for the night's rest, they learned the bitter fact that Jesus was missing

from the band of returning pilgrims. So the next day in alarm and anxiety they retraced their steps to Jerusalem.

Neither on that day nor during the night, nor throughout a considerable part of the third day, did they discover him, till at last they found Jesus in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. He was there, an eager-hearted and gifted boy, whose enthusiasm kindled their admiration. They were all charmed with the pure and noble-hearted boy.

Here then, seated at the feet of the teachers, Joseph and Mary found their divine son. They were awe-struck to find him, calm and happy, in so august a gathering. But Mary ventures to address him in the language of tender reproach : "My child, why dost thou treat us thus ? See, thy father and I were seeking thee with aching hearts." And then follows his innocent and simple answer : "Why is it that ye were seeking me ? Did ye not know that I must be in my Father's house ?"

These are the first recorded words of Jesus.

The temple was visited several times every day during the feast and it seems rather strange that Joseph did not go there first when searching for his pious son. And Jesus' answer is not so unnatural from such a spiritual boy. Still, we read : "And they understood not the saying which he spoke unto them."

However that may be, Jesus followed his parents to Nazareth and "was subject unto them. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man."

These few closing words comprise all that we are told about Jesus from his twelfth year till he had long entered upon manhood. Here thus ends, the story of Jesus' childhood.

The boy Jesus must have had his little troubles, his little fights and quarrels perhaps, as every boy has, brought up in a large family. His abundant vitality must have led him into little mischievous acts perhaps, for holy children are often naughty children. But these little outbursts of childish energy did not make Jesus any the less dear to the heart of his mother and friends, nor of the devotees.

Of Sri Krishna we are told that in his childhood he played many a naughty prank. But the devotees

love the child even in his naughtiness. So a Hindu saint tells us how the little Gopal, as Sri Krishna was called, once went into the dairy to eat the fresh butter. He is discovered and the dairy woman says: "Who are you, child?" "Well, lady, do not you know me? I am Gopal." "But what are you doing in my dairy, you naughty child?" "Oh, I thought it was my home, lady." "But why do I find your hand in the buttercup?" "Oh, lady, do not be offended. I am searching for a missing calf." And the poet sings: "Oh, may that naughty boy who so readily answered the shepherd's wife, enter into our hearts!"

And then the boy comes home one day and he cries: "Oh, mother, please give me the cup." "What for, my child?" "To drink milk, mother." "But, my boy, there is no milk now, wait till evening, when the cows come home." "When will that be, mother?" "When the darkness sets in, my darling." Then Gopal closes his eyes and says: "Mother, now it is dark, please give me the milk." And the devotee sings: "Oh, may the beautiful form of that sweet and clever boy, the

lovely shepherd boy who dwells in the heart of saints in meditation, the charming Gopal who played with the shepherd-lasses, fulfil our desires! Oh sweet child, grant me your sight, show me your lovely face." And many a Hindu saint in deep meditation has had a vision of the lovely child Gopal. And we have heard of Roman Catholic saints who have been blessed with a vision of the holy child Jesus.

"In whatever form the devotee longs to see Me," says Sri Krishna, "in that very form I appear before him." Blessed are such visions, blessed is the devout heart that enters into such close communion with God. Blessed be the child Jesus, blessed be the Lord in whatever form He reveals Himself to His children.

We bow down before all great Incarnations. And we pray with the divine boy Prahlad: "Oh, Lord, the intense love that man has for worldly objects, may we have that same love for Thee and Thee alone; and that only for Thine own sake!"

GURUDASA.

### WITH THE SWAMIS IN AMERICA.

#### III.

**S**UCH were the early days of the Vedanta movement in New York. Simplicity and earnestness was the predominating note in those days. The Society had rented a house in one of the modest quarters of the city. Here the Swami Abhedananda lived, here he met his students and held his classes. The parlour being rather small, a hall was rented for his Sunday lectures. The audiences gradually increased in number and one after the other, large halls were necessary.

The Sunday lectures appeared in print and these, together with the different publications on Vedanta, were offered for sale at the hall and at the Vedanta headquarters.

The Swami became popular and his work increased. He was a very busy man, lecturing, holding classes, giving private instructions and writing books on Vedanta. The Society flourished, the intellectual world was attracted. The Swami was invited to speak before University assemblies

and to address different clubs and societies. What had begun in a private, unostentatious manner, developed into a public movement. The Society was reorganised and the headquarters removed to a better section of the city. Different classes of students enlisted as members, and the Vedanta Society became a busy centre.

The change was natural, inevitable. Nothing remains stationary in life, it is growth or decay. But the old students did not like the change so much. They preferred the quiet simplicity of early days. This also was natural. They had experienced the benefit of small, more intimate gatherings at some student's home where every one knew each other. There was a close bond between these few students and their teacher. And with larger classes and many strangers dropping in, the atmosphere changed. Perhaps it was not quite reasonable to expect that things would go on exactly on the old footing. Anyhow the Swami felt

that he was called to reach out beyond his little circle, that his message had to go forth to all quarters, that the success of his work necessitated his meeting with the intellectual and well-to-do people of New York; that Vedanta was not for the few, but for the many.

It was at this stage of the Vedanta movement that the Swami Turiyananda appeared on the scene. He had just come from India via England with the Swami Vivekananda who was then the guest of Mr. Leggett, the president of the society, at his country home.

"Fresh from India," was in itself a recommendation in the sight of the old students. We do not want a westernised Swami; business and lecturing we have enough in America; we want a simple, meditative man,—was their attitude.

Right or wrong, this was the state of affairs. Swami Abhedananda, always strong and positive, followed his own counsel. He wanted to spread Vedanta, he had to follow his own plan. And he flourished. He became a very fine speaker. He enriched the Vedanta literature with a goodly number of his productions. He was called to other cities to lecture. He was loved, admired and applauded wherever he went.

The Swami Turiyananda was deputed by Swamiji to assist Swami Abhedananda in the New York work. This he did in his own quiet way. He took charge of the meditation class, conducted the children's class and gave short talks to the students. And during the absence of the Swami Abhedananda he lectured at the Vedanta headquarters. Many of the old students rallied around him, he got a little following of his own.

"Fresh from India," was a fit term for the Swami. The Indian atmosphere still seemed to hover about him. He was far from being Americanised. He represented India as the old students pictured her,—the land of simplicity, of meditation and of spirituality. Gentle, cheerful, meditative, little concerned about the things of this world, he made a deep impression on the minds of those who took Vedanta most seriously,—not as a philosophy to satisfy the intellect alone, but also as a practical guidance in their spiritual life.

And so we had two Swamis of different temperament, attracting the different students.

With the coming of Swami Turiyananda the

work that was spreading out became also intensified, for in him the fire of spirituality was always burning, ready to flame up at the least occasion. It was my good fortune for several years to be closely associated with him. What had been implanted in me by the loving care of the Swami Abhedananda, was now protected and nourished by the new Swami. Swami Abhedananda went ahead, ploughed new fields, planted new seeds. Swami Turiyananda took charge of the growing plants. But be it understood, the Swami Abhedananda kept a loving, watchful eye over his old students. If he could not give them the time and attention of former days, he never forgot them or ceased to love them. And it was perhaps during these very days that I saw in him the most unmistakable marks of a tender, loving heart.

I have related my first meeting with the Swami Abhedananda, let me now put down my meeting with and impressions of the Swami Turiyananda.

The news then had reached the Society that a new Swami was coming from India. We were anxiously expecting him. We are always greedy, it seems, for something new, a change, some excitement. We were on the tiptoe of expectation, an expectation that was not to be disappointed. The Swami was to be with us on a certain date. As usual, I went to the Vedanta Society after my work of the day was over. And that evening my first question was, almost before I entered the room, Has the new Swami come? A few of the members were there. Some were busy with Society work, others were talking together.

Adjoining the parlour was another room. It was kept dark except on evenings when there was a meeting. "Yes," was the reply, "the Swami has come, he is in the other room." I peeped in and there in the dark I saw the Swami alone, meditating. I thought this rather extraordinary. But not wishing to disturb him I withdrew into the parlour and joined my fellow students. Some had dropped in just for a moment and were leaving again. Only three of us remained. The two who stayed with me had met the Swami earlier in the evening. At last the Swami emerged from the darkness and joined us.

In appearance the Swami Turiyananda was quite a contrast to Swami Abhedananda. He was of shorter stature and his features were less classical.

But his manner was winning. His face was bright and open, as we find it in youths. He was probably a few years older than Swami Abhedananda. The latter also looked young for his years. He looked like a young, dashing college graduate. The Swami Turiyananda's face was like that of a happy, intelligent, thoughtful youth; at times very much so. In fact, as later I observed, his expression of face was subject to moods, more markedly than I have ever noticed in any human face. Sometimes his face indicated tremendous strength and an indomitable will-power, at other times remoteness as if his mind was withdrawn from the external world, sometimes he looked the picture of humility and again his face would be like that of a child, innocence and purity written in every line.

The Swami entered the room smiling. I was introduced to him. His manner was easy and I felt as if I was meeting with an old friend. "Oh, you have come," he said, "I have heard about you." I told the Swami how glad we all were to have him with us. "You see, Swami, we love India and every one and everything that comes from that holy land."

The Swami smiled. "That is good," he said, "and though I have not been in this country long," (he had been some time with Swamiji at Mr. Leggett's country home after coming from England) "though I have not been in this country long, I feel quite at home here. It is not as strange as I thought it would be. Human nature, I see, is the same everywhere. I feel as if I have come amongst friends."

"And so you have, Swami," I replied. Again he smiled. "Good! good!" he said. "Yes, you are all Mother's children and I know that you love India." Then we exchanged a few personal questions. "Did you have a pleasant sea voyage, have you been sea-sick, how is your health in this country?" etc. The Swami asked me about my age and occupation, etc. Then he said: "See here, Mr. K. knows a little Sanskrit." "Yes, Swami," I replied, "he is so clever. I am afraid you will be disgusted with me. I do not know even the Sanskrit alphabet."

"Oh, never mind," he said, "what shall you do with Sanskrit? It takes a lifetime to master it, you can use your time better. Be Mother's child

and think always of Her. But Mr. K., I see, is a very good man, he is past middle age and yet he is not married. Is not that excellent?"

"Yes, Swami, he is one of the old students, he is our best friend and he knows Swamiji."

"Oh, I am so glad. You will also know Swamiji, in time."

"Swami," I said, "did Mr. K. repeat Sanskrit Slokas to you?"

"No, he only told me that he was studying a little Sanskrit."

"Oh, Mr. K.," I said, "do give us some of your Slokas. Swami will be so glad to hear them." Mr. K. did not require much urging as well I knew and at once he began: Vasansi jirnani yatha vibaya etc. "As a man casting off worn-out garments takes new ones, so the dweller in the body, casting off worn-out bodies entereth into others that are new."

"Ah, ah! how nice! Go on Mr. K. it is excellent," said the Swami. Mr. K. beamed all over; he was so pleased that the Swami liked the Slokas. Then the Swami spoke to me and said: "You are also not married, I hear."

"No, Swami, I am a Brahmacharin. Swami Abhedananda has now taught us to look upon all women as our mother and I try to do that."

"Yes, yes, the Master taught us that way. That is the safest way, go on and remember it. Our Master had realised that every woman is the representative of the Divine Mother. He saw the Divine Mother in every one, good, bad or indifferent. I am so glad. Siva! Siva! I have already met with so many nice people, both in England and here."

"But, Swami, we are so active and materialistic, does not the hurry and bustle of Western life annoy you?"

"Yes, as a race you are very materialistic, but I have met with exceptions. And activity is not bad. I like your energy, you are all up and doing, I see no idleness anywhere. Only that energy should be controlled. It should go inward also, activity in inactivity. But not laziness, mind you. But you are a young race, you must enjoy a little. We in India do not know how to enjoy life, we have forgotten that. You will gradually pay more attention to the spiritual side of life and we will get a little more material comfort and enjoyment. That will come the more East and West meet

together. We both have to learn. But India holds the highest ideals. The West has not yet appreciated that. But it is coming. Hari aum tat sat." Then the Swami began to chant in a very low voice : Aum, aum, aum, Hari aum.

And so we were talking in a free and easy manner, when our lady friend, who was in charge of the rooms, called out : " Swami, do you know what time it is ? It is almost midnight. I am going to turn out the lights; otherwise you will keep us here all night and our friends will be late at their offices to-morrow."

" Yes, yes," said the Swami, " I forgot all about the time, I am so happy to be with you all."

" Never mind, Swami," I said, " the office does not begin till nine o'clock in the morning. There is plenty of time yet. What do you say, Mr. K. ? " Mr. K. smiled and said : " I am not in a hurry." But anyhow we took leave of the Swami and we told him that we would come back the following day.

We were so happy ! Mr. K. walked home with me part of the way. He was a simple, good-hearted man. And this evening he was like a boy. Well, I was as boy-like as he was and we talked and talked about the new Swami. I did not get much sleep that night. I do not know how Mr. K. fared, but the next evening I found him with the Swami again when I reached the Vedanta Home. And so evening after evening we met with the Swami, others joining us at times. We became closely and intimately acquainted with him.

The chant which I have mentioned was an outstanding feature with the Swami. Every one remarked about it and seemed impressed by it. It was new to us and I may be allowed to make a few remarks about it.

This chant was peculiar with the Swami. He would keep it up for hours at a time. When he was talking he would chant in between. After asking a question he would chant while listening to the reply. Walking, sitting, talking, in public or alone, always that soft, melodious chant went on. Sometimes it was rather amusing in our conventional Western life. In a crowded street car, the Swami unconcerned about his surroundings would sit softly chanting, to the surprise and wonderment of the other passengers. But the Swami seemed quite unconscious of that. Often I noticed the

passengers look at each other smiling. Of course there was not the least offence. Only it seemed to amuse them in this brown-faced stranger.

Before and after our meditations the chant would come in full strength. It was not only beautiful, it was also helpful, especially before meditation. It had the effect of quieting the mind and of creating an atmosphere. I may compare it with the effect produced by the burning of incense in a Roman Catholic church.

Sometimes the chant would come loud and strong, again it would be deep like a strong vibration, it would run up and end in a soft high note, very sweet. The tune also varied. This chant was with the Swami as long as he was in America. Aum, aum, Hari aum, it would go on and on.

I did not quite understand it at the time but now I realise how by this chant the Swami kept up an inward flow of unbroken meditation and how often it had the effect of making us pause and collect our scattered minds, drawing us inward also. But it was entirely natural with him. It came of itself, without the least effort.

Sometimes, especially later in the Shanti Ashrama, when we would be indulging in light talk we would suddenly hear the chant from the distance, coming louder and louder as the Swami approached us. And invariably it would put an end to our light talk and make us remember what we were at the Ashrama for. The object of our being there was never kept far from us any way. But of this later. It was one of the means.

Another peculiarity with the Swami was, that while talking with a person, softly chanting in between, he would sometimes look remote as if he were only half listening, as if his mind were elsewhere. This was often puzzling and misleading, especially when the Swami was slow in answering a question. It was sometimes thought that he was not interested in the subject or did not like to be drawn outward. But this was not the case. I noticed that he never lost the drift of the conversation and that his answers were always to the point. Once I questioned the Swami about it and he replied : " There are two ways of answering a question ; one way is to answer from the intellect, the other way is to answer from within. I always try to answer from within."

Considering the nature of these answers, how a

few words could give so much satisfaction to the questioner, it seems that this way of answering from within is most effective, it is answering by insight and is possible only for highly trained and concentrated minds. The answers were like flashes of illumination. The Swami would always keep his eyes towards the questioner and it seems to me that during this process of answering he got a glimpse of the mental state of the questioner. I know that this was sometimes the case with Swami Abhedananda, even when answering questions from the platform. His answer would then be more to the individual than to the audience. And so it sometimes happened that the answer was far more satisfactory to the questioner than to the audience as a whole. I remember that once one of us asked Swami Abhedananda after his lecture, why he had answered a certain question (which I can

not recollect now, but it was about Jesus) in the way he had done. And the Swami replied: "Because it was the answer the questioner needed, --to another person I might have given quite a different answer."

It also happened with Swami Turiyananda, as we have heard it was so often the case with his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, that he would suddenly begin to discuss a subject which was troubling and weighing on the mind of some one present. There was nothing to lead up to the subject and the person in question would be surprised how the Swami happened to solve his doubt and difficulty unasked for. These, I suppose, are the higher qualifications of a real teacher,—gifts or powers that are developed through a long period of strict Brahmacharya, self-discipline and mental control.

A BRAHMACHARIN.

### VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from page 200.)

**मनो नाम महाव्याघ्रो विषयारण्यभूमिषु ।  
चरत्यन्तं न गच्छन्तु साधवो ये मुमुक्षवः ॥१७६॥**

176. In the forest-tract of sense-pleasures there prowls a huge tiger called mind. Let good people who have a longing for liberation never go there.

**मनः प्रसुते विषयानपेषाद् ।  
स्थूलात्मना सूक्ष्मतया च भोक्तुः ।  
परीरवर्णश्रमजातिभेदाद् ।  
गुणक्रियाहेतुफलानि नित्यम् ॥१७७॥**

177. The mind continually produces for the experiencer all sense-objects without exception, whether perceived as gross or fine; the differences of body, caste, order of life, and tribe, as well as the varieties of qualification, action, means and results.

[ *Gross or fine*—in the waking and dream states respectively.]

*Action*—to obtain desired results.

*Means*—for these actions.

*Results*—such as enjoyment or liberation.]

**असंगच्छुपममुं धिमोहृ  
देहेन्द्रियप्राणगुणानिवद्धा ।  
अहममेति भ्रमयत्यजस्तं  
मनः स्वकृत्येषु फलोपभुक्तिषु ॥१७८॥**

178. Deluding the Jiva who is unattached Pure Intelligence, and binding him by the ties of body, organs and Pranas, the mind causes him to wander, with ideas of 'I' and 'mine,' amidst the varied enjoyment of results achieved by himself.

[ *Binding.....Pranas*—strictly speaking, it is our attachment for these that binds us. ]

**अध्यासदोषात्पुरुषस्य संस्कृति-  
रध्यासबन्धस्त्वमुनैव कल्पितः ।  
रजस्तमोदोषवतोऽविवेकिनो  
जन्मादितुःखस्य निदानमेतत् ॥१७९॥**

179. Man's transmigration is due to the evil of superimposition, and the bondage of superimposition is created by himself and none else. It is this that causes the

misery of birth etc. for the man of non-discrimination who is tainted by Rajas and Tamas.

[ *Superimposition*—This is the favourite theme of the Vedanta Philosophy, to explain how the ever-free Self came to be bound at all. The whole thing is a mistaken identity, a self-hypnotism, it says, and the way out of it lies in de-hypnotising ourselves. ]

**अतः प्रादुर्भाविद्यां परिषिद्धतात्त्वदर्शिनः ।  
येनैव भ्राम्यते विश्वं वायुनेवाप्नमण्डलम् ॥१८०॥**

180. Hence sages who have fathomed its secret have designated the mind alone as Avidya or Ignorance, by which alone the universe is moved to and fro, like masses of clouds by the wind.

**तन्मनःशोधनं कार्यं प्रथक्षेन मुमुक्षुणा ।  
विशुद्धे सति चैतस्मिन्मुक्तिः करफलायते ॥१८१॥**

181. Therefore the seeker after Liberation must carefully purify the mind. When this is purified, Liberation is as easy of access as a fruit on the palm of one's hand.

**प्रोक्षकसक्त्या विषयेषु रागं  
निर्मूल्य संन्यस्य च सर्वकर्म ।  
सच्छ्रद्धया यः अवगादिनिष्ठो  
रजःस्वभावं स धुनोति बुद्धे: ॥१८२॥**

182. He who by means of one-pointed devotion for Liberation roots out the attachment for sense-objects, renounces all actions, and with faith in the Real Brahman regularly practises hearing etc., succeeds in purging the Rajasic nature of the intellect.

[ *All actions*—that are done with selfish motives. *Hearing etc.*—i. e. hearing (from the lips of the Guru), reflection and meditation, of the highest Vedantic truth—the identity of the Jiva and Brahman. ]

**ग्रनोमयो नापि भवेत्परात्मा  
श्चाथन्तवस्त्वाप्यरिणामिभावात् ।  
तुःसात्मकत्वाद्विषयत्वहेतः-  
द्रैष्टा हि इश्यात्मतया न इष्टः ॥१८३॥**

183. Neither can the Mental Sheath be the Supreme Self, because it has a beginning and an end, is subject to modifications, is characterised by pain and suffering, and is an object. Whereas the subject can never be identified with the objects of knowledge.

[ *Is an object*—cognisable by the Self which is the eternal subject. ]

**बुद्धिर्बुद्धिनिद्रियैः सादृं सवृत्तिः कर्तृलक्षणः ।  
विज्ञानमयकोशः स्थात्पुंसः संसारकारणम् ॥१८४॥**

184. Buddhi with its modifications and the organs of knowledge, having the characteristics of the agent, forms the Vijnanamaya Kosha or Knowledge Sheath, which is the cause of man's transmigration.

[ *Buddhi*—the determinative faculty.

*Modifications*—such as Egoism etc.

*Haring*.....*agent*—thinking 'I am the agent.'

**प्रनुभ्रजचित्प्रतिविम्बरक्ति-**

**विज्ञानसंज्ञः प्रकृतेविकारः ।**

**ज्ञानक्रियावानहमित्यजसं**

**देहेनिद्रियादित्वभिमन्यते भूराम् ॥१८५॥**

185. This Knowledge Sheath, which seems to be followed by a reflection of the power of the Chit, is a modification of the Prakriti, is endowed with the function of knowledge, and always wholly identifies itself with the body and the organs etc.

[ *Followed*.....*Chit*—The Knowledge Sheath is in reality material and insentient, but a reflection of the *Chit* or Atman makes it appear as intelligent.

*Modification &c.*—and therefore insentient. ]

**अनादिकालोऽयमहंस्वभावो**

**जीवः समस्तव्यवहारवोदा ।**

**करोति कर्माण्यपि पूर्ववासनः**

**पुण्यान्यपुण्यानि च तत्प्रकानि ॥१८६॥**

**भुक्षेण विचित्रास्वपि योनिषु व्रज-**

**ज्ञायाति निर्यात्यध ऊर्ध्वमेषः ।**

**अस्त्वैव विज्ञानमयस्य जाग्रत्-**

**स्वप्नाद्यवस्थाः सुखातुःस्मोगः ॥१८७॥**

186-7. It is without beginning, characterised by egoism, is called the Jiva, and carries on all the activities on the relative plane. Through previous desires it performs good and evil actions, and experiences their results. Being born in various bodies it comes and goes, up and down. It is this Knowledge Sheath that has the waking, dream and other states and experiences joy and grief.

[ Previous desires—desires of previous births.

Comes and goes, up and down—is born and dies, in higher or lower bodies. ]

**देहादिनिष्ठाश्रमधर्मकर्म-**  
गुणाभिमानं सततं ममेति ।  
**विज्ञानकोशोऽयमतिप्रकाशः**  
प्रकृष्टसाक्षिध्यवशात्परात्मनः ।  
अतो भवत्येष उपाधिरस्य  
यदात्मधीः संसरति भ्रमेण ॥१८८॥

188. It always mistakes the duties, functions and attributes of the orders of life which belong to the body, as its own. The Knowledge Sheath is exceedingly effulgent, owing to its close proximity to the Supreme Self, which identifying Itself with it suffers transmigration through delusion. It is therefore a superimposition on the Self.

[ Orders of life --Ashramas. ]

**योऽयं विज्ञानमयः प्राणेषु हृदि स्फुरत्ययं ज्योतिः ।**  
**कूटस्थः सञ्चात्मा कर्ता भौक्ता भवत्युपाधिशः ॥१८९॥**

189. The self-effulgent Atman which is Pure Knowledge, shines in the midst of the Pranas, within the heart. Though immutable, It becomes the agent and experiencer owing to Its superimposition—the Knowledge Sheath.

[ The first part of this Sloka is a quotation from Brihadaranyaka Upa. IV. iii. 7.

In the midst of the Pranas—great nearness is meant. Prana means force, here the physiological and mental forces are referred to.

*Within the heart—in Buddhi, the seat of which is supposed to be the heart. ]*

**स्वयं परिच्छेदमुपेत्य बुद्धे-**

**स्तावात्म्यदोषेण परं मृषात्मनः ।**

**सर्वात्मकः सञ्चापि वीक्ष्यते स्वयं**

**स्वतः पृथक्त्वेन मृदो घटानिष्ठ ॥१९०॥**

190. Though the Self of everything that exists, this Atman, Itself assuming the limitations of the Buddhi and wrongly identifying Itself with this totally unreal entity, looks upon Itself as something different,—like earthen jars from the earth of which they are made.

[ *Buddhi*—here stands for the Knowledge-Sheath.

*As something different—as conditioned and bound, just an ignorant man may consider earthen pots as something distinct from the earth of which they are made. The wise man knows that the difference is simply due to name and form, which are creations of the mind. ]*

**उपाधिसम्बन्धवशात्परात्मा**

**मूलाधिधर्माननुभाति सद्गुणः ।**

**अयोविकारानविकारिवहिष्वत्**

**सदैकलूपोऽपि परः स्वभावात् ॥१९१॥**

191. Owing to its connection with the superimpositions the Supreme Self, even though naturally perfect and eternally unchanging, assumes the qualities of the superimpositions and appears to act just as they do—like the changeless fire assuming the modifications of the iron which it turns red-hot.

[ *Naturally perfect*—Or the phrase वाऽस्तु स्वभावात् may mean “transcending Nature.”

*Modifications—such as size, shape etc. ]*

**शिष्य उवाच ।**

**भ्रमेणात्यन्यथा वाऽस्तु जीवभावः परात्मनः ।**

**तदुपाधेनादित्वाद्वात्मानादंर्दर्शा इत्यते ॥१९२॥**

192. The disciple questioned, “Be it through delusion or otherwise that the Supreme Self has come to consider Itself

as the Jiva, this superimposition is without beginning, and that which has no beginning cannot be supposed to have an end either.

[ *Jiva*—individual soul, or the Self under self-imposed limitations. ]

अतोऽस्य जीवभावोऽपि नित्या भवति संसृतिः ।  
न निष्वर्तेत तमोद्धः कर्यं मे श्रीगुरो वद ॥१६३॥

193. "Therefore the Jivahood of the Soul also must have no end, and its transmigration continue for ever. How then can there be liberation for the Soul? Kindly enlighten me on this point, O revered Teacher."

[ *Jivahood*—the self-hypnotised state of the ever-free Atman. ]

श्रीगुरुहृष्टाच ।

सम्यक् पृष्ठं त्वया विद्वन्सावधानेन तच्छ्रुणु ।  
प्रामाणिकी न भवति भ्रान्त्या मोहितकल्पना॥१६४॥

194. The Teacher replied : Thou hast rightly questioned, O learned one ! Listen thou therefore attentively: The imagination which has been conjured up by delusion can never be accepted as a fact.

भ्रान्तिं विना त्वसङ्गस्य निष्क्रियस्य निराकृतेः ।  
न घटेतार्थसम्बन्धो न भसो नीलतादिवत् ॥१६५॥

195. But for delusion there can be no connection of the Self—which is unattached, beyond activity and formless—with the objective world, as in the case of blueness etc. with reference to the sky.

[ *Blueness etc.*—The sky has no colour of its own but we mentally associate blueness with it. The blueness is in our *mind*, and not in the sky. Similarly, limitation exists not in the Absolute Self, but in our own minds. ]

( To be continued ).

### TRUE SACRIFICE.

( *A Story from the Bhagavata.* )

**R**IN days of yore there lived in Northern India a great king named Rantideva. Little is known of his parents, who do not seem to have been celebrities. How this prodigy came of such a stock, heredity is powerless to explain.

Rantideva was a peculiar king. We might as well call him a beggar. Royalty is ever associated with wealth and power, pomp and splendour. But king Rantideva had none of these. And yet he was a great king, and has bequeathed his name to posterity.

He was a saintly king. He used to depend solely upon the Lord for his subsistence and had kept his treasures open to all that might be in need of them. He took no thought of himself and his family and would starve himself and give away everything as it came to him.

There is no end to the world's misery, and the fame of the king's benevolence having spread far and wide it was not long before his vast pro-

perty came to nothing. Matters came to such a pass that the king and his family had neither food nor drink for several weeks. The king, as we have said, would ask of nobody, and remained steady, though the demands of the flesh were almost unbearable.

The Kshatriyas were a hardy race famous for their fortitude. On the morning of the forty-ninth day, it is said, some food and water came to the famished monarch. The royal family was sorely in need of them, and the king himself was feeling his limbs giving way. With eagerness they were going to do justice to the things, when a Brahmin guest presented himself before them. The king cordially received him and gave him portions of the food and water with becoming courtesy, for he was in the habit of looking for the Lord everywhere. The Brahmin satisfied his hunger and went his way.

The king then divided the remaining food and

water among his family and proceeded to take his own share, when a Sudra came to him as guest, King Rantideva thought of the Lord and gave the Sudra of his own share. The guest took his leave satisfied.

Shortly after there came another man with a pack of hounds, and said, "Sir, myself and these dogs of mine are hungry. Please give us food." The King welcomed these new guests as cordially, thinking himself highly honoured by their presence, gave them the food that still remained, and saluted the dogs and their owner.

Now there was only a little water left, barely enough to allay the thirst of a single man, and the King was about to drink it, when a poor man of an "untouchable" caste came and piteously appealed to him with the words, "O King, I am mortally tired. Deign to give this 'unholy' outcast just a little water." The appealing words of the man and the tale of his terrible fatigue deeply stirred the feelings of the noble king, and melting with pity he spoke to the man in a tone that almost took away his sufferings, "I do not seek that God would grant me admission to an exalted state where all divine power would be mine, nor do I care for Mukti—but this is my earnest wish that I may enter into the bodies of all beings to take upon myself all their sufferings so that they may be set at ease! I was just now suffering from hunger and thirst and fatigue, my body was reeling and I was feeling dejected and miserable. But all these troubles of mine shall be at rest, by this offering of a little water to a poor being struggling for life." Saying this, though almost dying of thirst, the magnanimous king gave the man whom society sneered at as untouchable, the water which might save his own life.

In an instant the scene shifted. Before such a gigantic will-power the veils of Maya are rent open. The world-Gods, Brahmâ and the rest, who had assumed the forms of the Brahmin, Sudra and other guests to test the king's piety, could no longer hide their identity but stood revealed in their majestic forms, ready to confer on the king any boons he might ask. To one who desires enjoyments the sight of these Divinities means the consummation of his life's efforts. But on Rantideva whose whole soul was in the Oneness of Brahman, and who looked upon the Universe as the manifestation of

that Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, temptations of enjoyment could produce no effect. He simply bowed before the Gods and held his mind fast in the Supreme Lord, who is beyond the realm of relativity and who yet appears through His unimaginable powers as this universe of names and forms. He asked for no boons.

The Gods departed highly pleased with the saintly king's devotion. He had come out of the test triumphant. By his sacrificing himself for the sake of others and his utter disregard for enjoyments of the senses, he won his way to the life of a Jivan-mukta,—freed in this very life. Maya with all Her charms could no more allure him, and he was henceforth eternally satisfied with the Vision Beatific of his own Self as the Self of all.

King Rantideva is dead and gone, we mean, the fleshy vesture which clothed his soul. But his memory will be cherished by humanity as a priceless treasure as long as there is such a thing as unselfish love and self-sacrifice on this earth.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

, SWAMI PRAJNANANDA—AN APPRECIATION.

Ridgeley Manor, Stone Ridge, N.Y.,  
July 25, 1918.

To the Editor of the Prabuddha Bharata.

Sir,

The news of the death of Swami Prajnananda, conveyed by the May issue of the Prabuddha Bharata, is not only a personal loss but also is a severe blow to our country at the present crisis. My debt to Swami Prajnananda, as well as that of many others, has been too great to be stated fully at any time but I must say now what I wish I had said when that great spirit was amongst us.

You will agree with me that the late Swami Prajnananda was one of the very few gifted ones who perceived the value and significance of the life and work of the Swami Vivekananda. Our modern scholarship and life have been suffering under the tremendous impact of Western influences. Swami Vivekananda seems to be the sole person who not only removed the staggering

effect of that impact but created a positive force which we may now say is going to shape permanently the growing spirituality of India and of the whole world.

The life and inspiration of Swami Vivekananda have been of great influence in India and their significance has been revealed to us by Swami Prajnananda in a manner that none can rival. So far we have been all labouring under a heavy scholarship which owed its inspiration to Hegelianism. Hegelianism is very good for itself and for the race culture that produced it. In our case however it was not native to our racial traditions and ideals. Hegel is an expression of European life and thought-process. On the contrary our life and thought, if not opposed, are at least far different from those of Europe. To state this in simple terms, Hegel believed in the "historical view-point" and in "the concrete-universal" to borrow a phrase from Bosanquet. Now the difficulty of the "historical view-point" is that it reads every phenomenon, particularly that of human life, in terms of what has gone before and after it. In other words, the "historical view-point" relies on temporal events. It is altogether based on what is called "the time-process." How far time, philosophically speaking, is real or illusory is not the question here, but it is clear to us as Hindus that time is apparent, that is to say, a phase of Maya—consequently to us the "time-process" means very little. The "historical view-point" of Hegel which is based upon such "time-process," cannot be at all conducive to any lasting virtue in our thought process.

We notice also that the "concrete universal" suffers from what we should call a weakness, viz. that the Absolute though inclusive is not all-pervasive. Hegel's "Absolute" is a logical deduction and not a felt and realisable existence.

To the Hindu the Absolute, which means complete inclusiveness, is not only knowable but should be realised. That is why from the days of the Vedas the Hindu has repeated the words, "to know is to be," for the Absolute pervades everything. Just compare the case of Hegel with that of Sankara, Buddha and Vivekananda. Hegel knew of the Absolute. But Buddha not only knew Nirvana but became Nirvana. Sankara not only knew the Absolute but became identical with It. Similar-

ly Swami Vivekananda not only knew the Truth but became the Truth. Can we say the same about Hegel? To conclude, then, the Hindu view-point of the Absolute is that It is not a logical deduction created out of the intellectual processes of a German mind, but a through and through perception and a personal realisation of a living reality.

Can you imagine a race born to the Hindu view-point of the Absolute ever looking up to the Hegelian Absolute for light? Swami Prajnananda saw the utter incongruity of that and putting his articles together as they appeared in the Prabuddha Bharata we can see that he was successfully combating this pernicious and slavish adoration of Hegelianism. He pointed out to us that our salvation is and always will be in the continuity of the Hindu spiritual tradition that rose from the fountain of the Vedas and has come down through Swami Vivekananda. You cannot engraft Hegelianism on Hinduism. In fact you cannot make a Western Hindu, and Swami Vivekananda was the first enemy of such abortive effort. Swami Prajnananda has made that clear to us in a way that no one else could. He not only had the scholarship necessary for such a task but he had the inspiration that very few modern scholars can equal. With that to start with, his task, though not an easy one, was certain of realisation.

Swami Prajnananda has distinguished Indian history and life in terms not equivocal. In the main he has dissipated the last gloom that has hung over us since the days when the first Hindu took to worshipping Hegel in particular, and the European culture in general.

The European culture of to-day draws its strength from two diverse sources, viz., Hellenism, and Hebraism transmuted through Christianity. Hegel, who was a thorough expression of modern European culture, tries to state in logical terms the synthesis of Hellenism and Hebraism, which is highly beneficial for Europe and the West in general. On the contrary, in India our culture never comes from two foreign sources. We have no Greece or Israel to go to, but whatever Hebraism and Hellenism contributed to Europe came to us from our own soil, untouched and untarnished by an external influence. India has no need to go to foreign sources for her spiritual supplies. This was Swami Vivekananda's revelation and heartening

message to his race and Swami Prajnananda helped to make this clear to us in those few articles that he wrote for the *Prabuddha Bharata*.

To-day when the world agony is so intensive and thousands are dying on the field of battle or of epidemic and starvation, no Hegelian Absolute can console the heart of man. No logical and intellectual God, deduced by dialectics, can be anywhere near being able to soothe the pain of the hour. It is the God in us, illogical, unintellectual, and un-German who can sustain and strengthen the world so that it can march through the desolate fields of death into the God in whom we "live, move and have our being." Was not Swami Vivekananda right when he said a quarter of a century ago, "Europe is sitting on a volcano. If India does not come to her rescue with the religion of the Upanishads, she will blow up."

Europe has blown up. Asia is burning and America is on fire. Hegelianism has not helped matters at all. The face of the world is turning towards the East and at such a moment to receive the news of the death of Swami Prajnananda is overwhelming. And yet, who knows but that there are even worthier hands to whom the Mother is entrusting Her work in the inscrutable secrecy of Her silence? That India has the sacred waters that will wash the wounds of the world and heal them is a foregone conclusion to many of us. And it is up to us "carry on" this great work of service. Let us bear in mind that we are not the superiors of these great Westerners who are fighting the battle of another Kurukshetra. In this great world drama we have been granted the part of servants. Ours is to give what we have spiritually, as we have given materially to enhance the coming of victory. And the spiritual gift is the one that is the most difficult to give because it can be done only by a servant. The Great Carpenter has said, "The last shall be first." So though we are the servants, we are also the masters for only a servant can be a master. Let us pray with the example of Swami Prajnananda before us, that we shall be able to continue the task which he has left us. With these few inadequate words I have tried to give utterance to the gratitude that intellectually and spiritually we owe to the deathless spirit of Swami Prajnananda.

Dhan Gopal Mukerji.

## RAMKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK IN NORTH BENGAL.

Since our report on the 10th October last waters have receded from the villages and fields even. The panic being over, the villagers have returned to their homes. With the winter before them, they are re-erecting their houses to make them as comfortable as possible, with the funds they have after all these privations. The cultivators have begun over again to re-till their fields for making them ready for 'Rabi' crops. For all these the labouring class is also getting work, though at a lower rate. The Government is helping the people with agricultural loans and by selling 'Rabi' seeds. Under the circumstances we have closed our rice distributing centres excepting Dubalhati and Hasaigari. But there are a fair number of poor families, widows and old men with minor children, who need such help yet. To such families in our area, we have decided to give some monetary help at a time so that they may use them as a capital in husking business and thereby maintain themselves from its profits or may use them in erecting their huts or in whichever way they may think it preferable. They will be distributed from the following five centres: -Noagaon, Dubalhati and Hasaigari in Thana Noagaon; and Bhandergram, Ratval, in Thana Raninagar. We come to know that the Government has decided not to give any gratuitous relief but we know from our particular knowledge of the villagers, that there is just need of it.

17 mds. of rice were also distributed as temporary relief from all centres in these weeks. Kasimpur centre in Thana Raninagar was closed on the 5th October last. Balihat centre's 30th September's weekly report was received after the publication of the previous report; so it is included in the present one. 55 pairs of new cloths, besides old ones were also distributed during the weeks under report.

In our Hansaigari centre from the 3rd to the 23rd October last 840 cattle of nine villages were helped with 35 kahans of straw bundles in 4 weekly distributions.

Day by day the situation in North Bengal flooded area is going to be normal. Shortly we shall be able to announce that we have closed our remaining centres there. We are grateful to the generous public who have helped us either with contributions

of money or cloths in serving humanity. We also give them our heartiest thanks on behalf of the destitutes who received help in their times of need. With the funds which we have in our hands we shall be able to finish our present work in North Bengal. But we fear in near future, Heaven forbid, the people may require further help. Even now appeals for help have begun to pour in from other quarters such as the districts of Bankura, Birbhum, Puri etc. If we receive further appeals from these places we shall have to open relief centres there immediately. So we appeal to our generous countrymen to continue to send in their contributions to the Ramkrishna Mission Provident Relief Fund, at the following addresses:—(1) President, Ramkrishna Mission, the Math, Belur P.O., Howrah; (2) the Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission, Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukerji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

Calcutta, Saradananda.  
8-11-18. Secy., R. K. Mission.

### NEWS AND NOTES.

It gives us great pleasure to go through the seventeenth annual report of the Ramkrishna Home of Service, Benares (Jan.—Dec. 1917). Of the many Sevashramas that have come into being in India under the inspiration of the great Swami Vivekananda, this Home at the City of Benares was the first, and it is gratifying to note that it leads all such institutions in respect of its extensive scope. For instance, during the year under review no less than 16,936 persons obtained relief from the Home, of whom 6,655 were men, 4,028 women, and 6,253 children—showing an increase of 13.4 per cent. over the last year's figures. The service was rendered irrespective of caste, creed or colour, and the patients hailed from all parts of India. The number of in-patients was 1016 (including the 20 inmates of the Branch Refuge at Dasaswamedh), as against 769 of the previous year. Of these 95 were picked up from the streets, ghats, and private houses and conveyed to the Home by the workers through the assistance of the local people. For want of accommodation 32 patients suffering from infectious and female diseases were sent to other hospitals of the city at the expense of the Home. Amongst the indoor cases there were 116 helpless persons who were provided with food and shelter,

and 4 invalids were being maintained in the Home.

The Home treated 23 phthisis cases as inpatients, 28 cases in their own homes as outpatients, sent 14 cases to other hospitals and helped 4 patients with diet in addition to medicines. It treated 8 small-pox cases and sent one to another hospital. In the Branch at Dasaswamedh 15 homeless aged invalid women, 4 helpless widows and a child were maintained. Of the 15,150 outpatients served by the Home, 350 were too poor to pay for their diet which was supplied to them by the Home. Besides the above, 190 persons received other kinds of regular help in money or kind, and 580 persons temporary help of this kind. The Home performed 163 operations.

The total receipts of the Home during the year amounted to Rs. 39,727-12-6, including Rs. 12,304-2-6 for the building fund. The total expenditure was Rs. 55,321-5-5 including Rs. 13,714-4-7 for building work.

From the year under review the Home has been admitting inmates to the 35 new beds in the five segregation wards built in the previous year. This has entailed an additional expenditure on the Home. Actual experience has led the Home to contemplate the building of (i) a Refuge for poor old invalids, (ii) a Home for widows and (iii) an Orphanage for the children who have fallen in its charge. The Home appeals to the generous public for funds to carry on the general work, as also to construct the above buildings. The necessity of these is self-evident, considering the fact that Benares is the city of Moksha, where people from all parts of India flock to pass their last days, and very often are thrown by circumstances on the mercy of casual charitable persons. The disinterested work of the Home speaks for itself, and we commend all pilgrims to the holy city to pay a visit to this institution, and if they are satisfied with the work done, to help it as far as in them lies. All contributions may kindly be sent to the Asst. Secy., Rk. Home of Service, Luxa, Benares City.

THE Tithi of Srimat Swami Vivekananda's 57th birthday falls on Thursday, 23rd January, 1919. The public celebration will be held at the Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramkrishna Mission, and most branch centres on Sunday, the 26th January. The feeding of the poor Narayanas will be an important feature of the day.

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR

## Awakened India

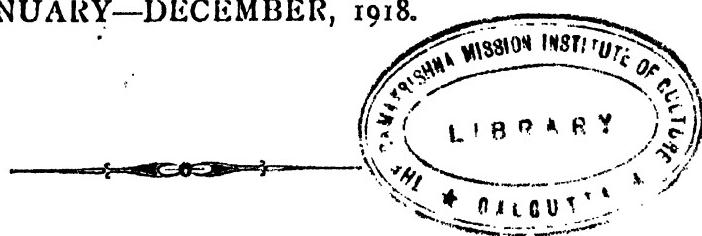


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Katha Upa. I. M. G.

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